



# 107TH FIELD COY., R.E.



А.П.О.





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Collections and Recollections  
of  
107th Field Coy., R.E.



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## PREFACE.

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As two war-weary subalterns of the Company sat chatting round their dug-out fire one winter's night in the wilds of Macedonia, in a certain sector of our long line, the conversation turned—in that inexplicable manner in which it turns to all sorts of subjects—to printing and books. Remembering that many Regimental Magazines, etc., have been produced during the war, the idea occurred to them “Why shouldn't we have a book?”—a book by the Company for the Company—a book well bound, that would be an interesting souvenir in years to come. That it couldn't be done didn't cross their minds. Is it not a tradition that the Corps of the Royal Engineers must be able to turn their hands to anything—which they took included even writing a souvenir book. They immediately decided to get in contributions. In such a manner the idea of this volume had its origin.

Written as it is during the course of the campaign, no details or descriptions can be given of the many interesting—or otherwise—places visited during our wanderings in Macedonia, or of many of the humours, joys and sorrows of war, or the glorious deeds that have won no honours in action. But though military details are necessarily excluded, this volume does, we hope, give a general idea of the country we are fighting in; its inhabitants and customs, and some amusing occurrences to members of our Company—and so is at once instructive and entertaining, and will in years to come recall to many of us our sojourn in the Balkans.

In the happier times which all look forward to when the war is victoriously ended; when we are back once more in "Blighty," and there is no enemy to whom "information" can be given, and consequently no censor with his blue pencil, we hope to publish another volume of the Company, in which we can give more interesting details of the life of the Company, of the extremely varied work it has done, the places it has visited, and the deeds its members have done in battle to uphold the tradition of the corps, and of our life in this distant land—in short, something more detailed of what we have "done in the Great War"—something of which we are proud.

Our thanks are due to all ranks who, in the spare time from work in the line, under conditions where there is little "inspiration," have contributed to the "Company Book"—all contributions having been made in the field, on active service.

THE EDITORS.



# SONG TO TUNE OF REGIMENTAL MARCH.

When the bugles are a calling,  
And the shot and shell are falling,  
When the smoke and smell of powder 's on the wind,  
Where the sharper rifle rattle,  
Shows the forefront of the battle,  
A squad or two of sappers you will find.

Be it bridging or pontooning,  
Be it survey or ballooning,  
Or a path thro' swamps, or wooded land to clear,  
There's the boys they all look out for,  
The one, they all shout out for,  
The overworked, long suffering Engineer.

Everywhere 's our motto ;  
Where our country needs ;  
Striving to assist her,  
Not by words, but by deeds.  
The first, the bugle calling ;  
Last, to leave the war,  
Is the proud tradition  
Of our glorious Corps.

SERGT. JENKINS, with apologies.

Can be sung to the tune of Regimental March—"Wings"

## THE TRAINING OF THE COMPANY.

The Company was formed—or at anyrate it started life as a nucleus on the 27th November, 1914. It consisted of:—O.C., then Captain Eustace, R.E., and one

officer, and one corporal (now C.M.S.) Cole, and about twenty men—at St. Mary's Barracks, Chatham.

Next day on the 28th, we started on our career as a Company—leaving Chatham and going to Shrewsbury with great enthusiasm. One of the twenty, I remember, leaning out of the carriage window at Chatham Station, and asking above the songs of his companions “when we should get at the enemy.” So great was his zeal, however, that he was by no means depressed by the reply which intimated that months of toil and training was to come first.

At Shrewsbury, the strength mounted quickly to about sixty or so, and two more officers, Lieutenants Dove and Gaudy, came to help with the troubles—amusements of training—and they were many. I think the chief difficulty with the new armies of that period was that no one really knew what was required. Old methods were being altered by new experiences—reported from the front—almost daily, and was certainly changed again shortly afterwards with other modifications. To learn and to teach are by themselves sufficient acquirements by the average mortal, but to do both at once was another matter, and one which I think Kitchener's armies attempted, and overcame on their own, within the whole extraordinary “success,” chiefly thanks to the spirit and perseverance of all concerned, animated by the one desire, namely, to “get on with the war.” This, I think, always has been—and still is—the feeling of the Company.

In those days at Shrewsbury my recollections are chiefly of active exercise—drill and football—on the outlying ground beyond the town, and handy to billets

and route marches, and general encouragement to keep the eyes open and bodies fit—regardless of wind, sunshine or rain.

Possibly many of us still remember a particularly muddy lane, which we devotedly splashed through—amidst obdurations regarding “march discipline” and keeping in the ranks, mingled with much laughter.

Then came the change of field works, and the start of Engineer training—under C.Q.M.S Parker and (?) to whom we allow a debt of gratitude for their untiring efforts on our behalf. Good luck to them both, for we were by no means the last unit they wrestled with.

There was a Christmas Day, too—our first for those who were not fortunate enough to get leave—and a most successful evening—under the chairmanship of C.Q.M.S. (?)—it was.

By the end of January the strength was raised to six officers and about 100 men, and owing to alterations in the Divisional Engineer Establishment, we went up to ten Divisions on the list, and joined the present one at Sutton Veny, and then really started getting busy, as we were much behind the rest, in every department. Numbers were speedily made up, in February, by large drafts of men, and by April the dismounted branch began to take shape. Digging and entrenching—mines—explosives—bombing—bridging (all sorts), ending with a pontoon course at Pangbourne, which is, I think, a pleasant recollection to all who were there.

By this time the mounted section was arriving, and tho' there were about six men per animal, that department soon got going, and with the advent of —— of



——— completely wild mules—the Field Company began to take shape.

Most of us remember the antics of two very attractive mules, whose chief amusement, in addition to kicking, was a passion for boxing with their front feet. Then, with wagons and breaking in of teams to draught and a few to pack work, came Brigade and Divisional exercises.

The expert used to say that “the battle is the soldiers’ holiday.” That may have been, but such exercises were far from holidays, though at times, on a fine day, the defence of a farm or wood was a restful occupation—not so for officers or N.C.O’s, whose efforts were of necessity strenuous, and as obviously condemned as wrong in subsequent criticisms.

The old adjutant ————of———learning by mistakes, however, never hurt anyone with a sense of humour—and that was all part of the show. And what would the British Army be without its prerogative, if getting told off on general principles for a job about which he oft does not happen to know, or enquire for the details or reasons. An excellent practice and stimulating to the intellect, which broadens the mind. The arts, peace training and war are much alike in that one must attempt to get the other fellow’s point of view and act accordingly in training to keep your end up, and be pleasant; and in war, to down the enemy and be as “offensive” as possible.

By the end of August, last leaves were being taken, and all were ready for the next phase in the great undertaking when, on September 19th, the Company, at war strength, started from Sutton Veny for active service.

How it fared and found itself, and what it became is another story. Nor am I at liberty to give the answer; but I am content to think that any one of those who have left us, from one cause or another, after sharing the mud, cold, the heat, flies, mosquitoes, sorrows and joys, sickness and danger—with the boys of the —th Field Company R.E.—will know the answer. To close this account of the formation of the Company, I must refer to the devoted perseverance and patient hard work which the late O.C., Major Eustace, put into



O.C.'s DAILY CONSTITUTIONAL ROUND THE WORKS.

the training of the company. No one but myself, I am certain, have any idea how great were the difficulties successfully overcome—and it has been, I know, a great regret with him that he was removed to higher spheres of usefulness, and had to leave the old Company before its job was completed thoroughly.

H. H. E. GOSSET.

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### PLEASURES OF SPY HUNTING.

In the early hours of a bitterly cold November morning, four British Tommies might have been seen picking their way along one of those small bye-roads so common in Northern Flanders. At the time of the story, it resembled an absolute sea of mud, relieved here and there by miniature lakes, caused by recent enemy shells. The four men trudged along in silence, each contemplating a well-earned rest—for they had been working and fighting for the previous three days.

They were almost in sight of their billets when they were confronted by the C.O. After exchanging a few remarks, he took them to a spot from where could be dimly discovered, in the distance, a group of farm houses, situated among a cluster of trees. "What do you make of that, Blake?" asked the C.O. of the senior soldier, pointing to where a bright red light kept flashing out, apparently from one of the upper windows of one of the farm houses. "It cannot be our signallers, sir," replied Blake, "as they do not use red lights for sending messages." "Can you make out what they are saying, Kelly," he continued, turning to one of his comrades who was an expert at reading



the Morse code. They waited a few minutes, but Kelly could not make anything 'telligible out of it, and remarked that, perhaps, whoever was sending was using code. "Well, Blake, I feel convinced that whatever message it may be, it is being sent by spies," rejoined the C.O.; "and I want you four to go and find out;" and after warning them to use all caution walked away and was soon lost to sight.

"Here's a fine go!" exclaimed Jones, who was feeling anything but travelling perhaps another two or three miles on an empty stomach. Still with the idea of catching a nest of spies, and with visions of leave to "Blighty," they set off, determined that whatever happened, those responsible for that ominous red light would have a rough time of it at their hands.

They had travelled about a mile when a small river presented the first obstacle—as all bridges that had previously spanned the river had recently been blown down by the enemy. However, all four being fairly good swimmers, they were soon in the water, striking out for the opposite bank, and in a few minutes were standing shivering—with their sodden clothes clinging to them—on the opposite bank. It had been an icy cold bath, and rendered rather dangerous by the fact that they were wearing their thick military greatcoats and equipment. Still, all four were now fully excited, and struck off across country, with water quelching out of their boots at every step. They had covered about another mile or so, when Blake decided it would be better to resort to crawling, as they were now within easy view of the house—from which the signalling still went on—and should anyone be on the look-out, it

would give the spies ample time to clear out. Presently they came up to a road which ran past the house, and after worming their way across, found themselves in a dirty stagnant ditch, that ran parallel with the road, but which afforded good cover from anyone who might chance to be on the watch. They had not gone far along the ditch when Harris—who was bringing up the rear—said he thought he saw someone moving among the trees. After removing their caps, they peered over the bank—which formed one side of the ditch—and sure enough there—partially hidden by the bushes and trees which surrounded the house— was a man not forty yards away.

After a hurried council of war, Blake decided to leave Kelly to watch the man, who appeared by his actions to have grown suspicious of our whereabouts, whilst Jones, Harris and himself intended to circumvent the house and gain entrance at the back. The plan being that if they left by the front door, Kelly—who was a dead shot—could pick them off as they came out.

However, the plans were never carried out, as at that moment the man who had been watching, turned and made his way to the house, evidently intent on warning those who were working the flash lamps, which still sent out their message. With Blake it was now or never, and as soon as the man turned his back, he gave orders for all four to pounce on the man and so frustrate him giving the warning to the inmates of the house. There followed a short hurried scuffle, in which the man was disarmed and held by the other three.

It was now that Blake made the discovery that, instead of a spy, they had inadvertently tackled an artillery

gunner, who had been posted as a sentry, and before they had time to realise their mistake, they were quickly surrounded by the remainder of the artillery guard, who quickly disarmed them and bundled them into the house. Once inside they were securely tied with ropes, whilst one of the guard was dispatched to bring the officer on duty.

In due course he arrived, and after carefully scrutinising the four, started a rambling cross-examination. Having satisfied himself that his four prisoners were indeed British Tommies, he blazed out at Blake—"Well, what in the name of hell are you doing here, anyway?"

"I was sent," replied Blake, "to round up some spies, which my C.O. believed to be hiding in this farmhouse, and who have been seen sending messages in code, by the means of a red light." "Doesn't your C.O. know an ammunition column's distinguishing lights at night?" growled the officer. "Yes, Sir," answered Blake, who by now was feeling somewhat chagrined by the officer's remarks. "Do you yourself know how an ammunition column is represented at night?" he thundered at Blake. "I have always understood that a red light and green is the distinguishing sign," coolly replied Blake. "Well, and what the devil do you call that?" said the officer as he led Blake to the door, and pointed to a flag-staff—from which hung a single red light—at which he started to fume and rage, calling the guard he demanded to know how long the green light had been out.

Everything was clear now to Blake who could see that the green lamp, which had been used with the red for denoting an ammunition column, had been smashed.



The result being that every time the lamp swung past the post it made a dot or dash according to how far it was blown past the post by the wind.

"I'm damned if ever I go spy hunting again!" exclaimed Jones, after they were well on their way back to their billets. "And now for another bath," said Harris, as once more they were confronted by the river. At last they reached their billets, and had their much-earned rest. Subsequently Blake reported his experience to the C.O., for which he was complimented on the way he managed to disarm the sentry before he could give warning. The C.O. added that the experience was none the less dangerous, as had the four been discovered before they disarmed the sentry, there might have been bloodshed.

SERGT. W. R. BROWN.

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"THERE 'S A LONG, LONG TRAIL."

*(Parody of the Song.)*

Poor Old Bill was sitting in a dug-out,  
The door was open wide,  
Little Willie smoking just a woodbine,  
Standing by his side.

"Daddy, let me go to Potsdam,  
I'll go home to tea."

"Why don't you be wiser,  
You just stop with me."

Poor Old Bill and Little Willie,  
They've a long, long trail to go,  
And while our trail leads upward  
Their's lies down below.

They already smell the brimstone,  
 They begin to feel the heat,  
 They can see the Devil waiting  
 Upon his judgement seat.

Night and day my men are falling,  
 Everywhere they go,  
 List !! The enemy is calling,  
 Calling sweet and low.  
 Soon our wire they will be cutting  
 With their beastly tanks,  
 Aeroplanes we get,  
 Whether dry or wet,  
 Cutting down our ranks.

It's a long, long trail to Victory,  
 But we're getting on the way,  
 And the dawn is in the East there,  
 See! the break of day;  
 And Old Bill's star is waning,  
 It is sinking out of sight,  
 And the trail of Peace is coming  
 'Twixt the darkness and the light.

SPR. W. H. COLLINS.

### A CASE FOR THE PARSON.

Sergeant.—“ What religion ? ”

Pioneer.—“ Nuthin' ”

Sergeant.—“ I must put you down something.”

Pioneer.—“ Right O! Put me down a b—— 'ea-  
 then ! ”

N. B.

## MARSEILLES.

Most of the Company passed through Marseilles on their way to the Balkans. Those that did so were as a rule lucky in being able to see a little of the town, before being hurried away on board a troopship.

After a long journey across France, the train plunges into a series of tunnels from which it does not come out until right alongside the docks. The first sight of the town is not encouraging, long wharfs lie in row after row, with dingy looking warehouses upon them, at regular intervals. The whole place is a scene of activity. Talkative Frenchmen jostle with negroes from Senegal, and all the various other tribes that form part of the French Colonial labour corps. Everywhere can be seen bales and bundles of goods, crates full of chickens or cabbages and heaps of refuse.

Marseilles has always been the chief port of the South of France, since the earliest times. The Phœnicians used to sail over here in their long galleys, bringing their goods, including the famous Syrian purple dyes. In Roman times, Marseilles was known as Mascula. The town itself consisted of a number of rough mud huts on the steep hill east of the harbour, surrounded by walls and ramparts. In Julius Caesar's writings these were mentioned as being particularly fine fortifications; though judged by modern standards, we should probably consider the ramparts as too conspicuous for proper camouflage to be possible.

Coming down to modern times, Marseilles was one of the centres of the French Revolution. It was here that Rougêt de Lisle, a young army officer, wrote La



Marsellaise—the present French National Anthem. He used to sing it at public meetings, and the people were so inspired by its fine air, that a large number of them marched the whole way to Paris, singing as they went. Throughout the history of France, Marseilles has always played a large part.

The modern town has nearly a million inhabitants. The centre of the town is still the Vieux Port (Old Harbour). From here the main street—Rue Cannebière—runs up the gentle slope to the north. Here are the biggest and best shops, and the trams that radiate to all the various suburbs. The street itself is very wide, with four tram lines and splendid broad sidewalks. One of the most interesting parts of the town is reached by walking down the western side of the Vieux Port. Here are the fortifications, made at the time when Nelson was blockading Toulon, twenty miles to the east. Here also is the enormous Byzantine Cathedral.

The surrounding country consists of a ring of stony hills, covered with fir trees and scrub, which cuts the town off from the interior. In fact Marseilles is very inaccessible except from the sea. Possibly in past years, this has contributed largely to the safety and prosperity of the people of the town, so that now we may safely say that Marseilles is the chief port of the Mediterranean. From here, in peace time, steamships run to Algiers, Morocco, Tunis, Port Said, Alexandria, Constantinople, Salonica, Athens, Smyrna and the Levant.

Marseilles is the headquarters of the Messageries Maritimes, the principal French line of passenger and

trading steamers. The port is the principal, if not the only, outlet of France towards her colonies in the North of Africa.

In the bay lies the famous island of Monte Cristo, from which a prisoner once escaped by exchanging places with a dead body in a sack. The sack was thrown into the sea, upon which the man cut himself free with a knife, and then swam to the mainland. However, to enumerate all the interesting things in Marseilles would require a whole book in itself, so here we will leave Marseilles, hoping when we go back to "Blighty," that our luck will take us back that way.

F. W. T. HARDS.

#### A FRAGMENT FROM FRANCE.

The company was entrained for its first trip up from the base. It had much to learn, as this story—a true one—is meant to illustrate.

A bumpy passage in the old truck—Hommes 40, Chevaux 8—is never a pleasant experience—but as before stated it was the first trip, and in September, so there was nothing really to grouse about. Later on we tried it in a blizzard, and then learnt what a most unpleasant performance this kind of a joy ride could be. We started early in the morning, in good spirits, but the train bumped on and on—at its leisurely crawl, and we got hungrier and hungrier, seeming to be getting no nearer our destination, when about four o'clock there was an extra bump, and much noise in French, so we gathered it was a halt for a stretch—tea and refreshment.

It is on an occasion like this that the sapper or dismounted man, as apart from his mounted companion, gets the pull. As the Sappers "fell in" on the platform, with mess tins for a meal, the drivers were collected at the far end for the purpose of executing their duty, of watering and feeding the animals.

As they had to water by bucket from a single tap, it took a little while, and many were the envious glances down the platform at the Sappers, making an excellent meal at the far end of the train. However, all things, good and bad—I had almost added the war, too—come to an end, and the drivers "fell in" at last, their job done, and were dismissed to pick up what was left in the way of a meal, which the thoughtful C.S.M. had sent up, and was waiting for them.

They gathered round the dixies, but apparently the sappers had finished the milk, and the drivers made the point quite clear as they dipped out the brown, unpleasant-smelling compound. Some, braver than others, even persisted in tasting it, but quickly spat it out, and emptied their tins and proceeded to tell each other what they thought of the war and the sappers in particular, when passed by their officer.

"Well, boys, how's it going down?" A gloomy silence; when up steps a prominent N.C.O., "I am afraid this tea's bad, Sir—the men cannot drink it." "How's that, let's try it! Give me your mug—Hm! certainly an odd smell—now for a taste—Great Scott!"

Then, "Sergeant Major!" "Yes, S'r," "Dish up some more tea, please—the drivers have all turned T. T."

"Alright you men, there'll be some tea up presently,"

"This is rum and coffee. By the way Driver B—— just slip over and fetch my water bottle, and fill it up."

The word "rum" is a miracle worker of the first order, and I'll leave you to guess how many abstainers waited for the tea. Two there were only, I think, and they, you'll agree, really had something to grouse about.

To conclude this true story, I sometimes wonder whether they run to rum in the American Navy, and if so, whether the N.C.O. who reported the tea undrinkable, was really a "sailor." It must have been in the dim and distant past. For certain it is that he was not one of the two abstainers—perhaps he, too, had a water bottle to fill.

H. H. E. GOSSET.

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### JUST SMILE AND JOG ALONG.

When the world seems dark, lad,  
And everything goes wrong,  
Don't worry o'er what might have been,  
Just smile—and jog along.

When you think you're down and out,  
Of the world you've had enough,  
Just force a smile, it's worth the while,  
And it won't seem half so rough.

'Tis true life's full of ups and downs,  
More often down than up,  
Or, so it seems, still never mind,  
You're not alone when drinking sorrow's cup.



For every man has his cares,  
 Not one more than another,  
 And your smile, once in a while,  
 May cheer a weary brother.

Yes, trouble comes to every soul,  
 No man is exempt,  
 So play the man, smile all you can,  
 And treat trouble with contempt.

Remember any fool can smile,  
 When everything goes right,  
 But when the wheel comes off the cart  
 It's then he shirks the fight.

Sure as the day of sunshine  
 Follows the night of rain,  
 So will your trouble take its flight,  
 You'll never smile in vain.

So when the road of life, lad,  
 Seems wearisome and long,  
 Don't say "I'm done; I've had  
 Enough"; just smile—and jog along.

SPR. CHAS. G. P. HUXTABLE.

#### WIND UP.

"Stand to! Turn out everybody."  
 So out of bed I creep,  
 Knowing quite well there was nobody  
 Wanting to attack Dové Tepé.

SPR. GALLICHAN.



SOLDIERS, TAKE CARE!!  
"FATTY" IS NEAR WITH HIS "CROWN & ANCHOR."  
TAKE CARE!!! BEWARE!!!!

## DAWN AND SUNSET—THE BEAUTY OF EGYPT.

*(Impressions from a visit to Alexandria).*

We arrived off Alexandria harbour in the very early morning—of December 3rd, to be exact. And it seemed as if the East meant to give us a right royal welcome, and unveil to us her beauties, revealing them one by one—beauties that our bleaker Northern clime could not give, showing herself in all her beauty and grandeur.

A dawn such as we witnessed that morning is not quickly or ever forgotten. At first all was dark. Across the water the lighthouse blinked. And then as the first rays of light appeared over the sea, now a blue-black colour in the semi-darkness, the sky was deep, deep blood-red. Gradually it changed to orange, and got still lighter, till the sun came up in majesty, like an enormous ball of fire. He was not veiled in fog or bleak grey cloudy sky, as one too often sees at home, but arose, a very King of the Heavens, a mighty Emperor resplendent in all his glory, ushered in with a blaze of light, surrounded with pomp and colour.

The orange changed to yellow and almost white, and then, later, the sky was rosy pink over the sun, with fleecy clouds across it, tinged pink by its rays, like slaves attendant on their great master, happy in reflected glory. It was indeed a wonderfully beautiful sight, and no picture could attain, let alone exaggerate, its beauty.

By now the sea had become an azure blue, exquisite in its intensity. How often, with only the picture of our own grey or light blue Northern seas, in one's mind,

did one look at a painting of such a sea, and say "Impossible, no water could be like that." But here before our eyes it lay in all its beauteous and glorious reality ; not the light blue of our summer seas, but a deep ultramarine blue, blue as a sapphire—a sight that one could drink in for hours and not be satisfied. And the sky matched the sea.

And the sunset ! The beauty of the dawn described above, is only excelled by the glorious sunsets. The atmosphere is of a wonderful clearness ; there is none of the hazy indistinct outlines so familiar to most of us, but a wonderful clear cut, sharp definition. In buildings, etc., details can be seen from a distance, and owing to the beautiful clearness of the air, the silhouettes formed by objects between the observer and the sunset, are perfect. Never have I seen such silhouettes—absolutely jet black and as sharply and as clearly defined—more so if possible, and a thousand-fold more beautiful, than a printed one. Add to these jet black silhouettes, formed by the objects on land, the glories of the sea and sky, and one can only form a faint idea of the Alexandrian sunset.

One can look at them for months, and yet wish to look on ; the beautiful red glow that lights up the western sky—the heavens seem as if they were alive with fire—the colours merging into one another, from deep, often blood-red, through orange, purple, etc., to the azure blue of the upper sky. If clouds are present, they are usually coloured a rosy red from the sun, and lie flaming across the sky.

And one does not gaze on this as upon some great painting or work of art that never changes. All the



while, Nature, the great artist, is presenting us with a living picture, and his brush applies some new and beautiful tinge. As the sun sinks lower and lower, the colouring gradually changes, until now one predominates, now another. The pink fleecy clouds become purple, and gradually the sky becomes blue-black as night falls.

And on turning to the East one may well exclaim, "Is it dawn?"—for the colouring of the West is reflected in the East, and as the sun sets, the Eastern sky is lit up with a red or beautiful purple glow. As he came so the King of the Heavens departs, a mighty ruler departing in a blaze of light and pomp and riotous colour; and as he recedes and his rays grow dim, one can only look on in awe and admiration, thankful for having seen the splendour and beauty of his court.

One sunset scene in particular will ever remain in my memory. We were camped on the sea shore at Sidi-Bishr, about eight miles E. of Alexandria. Close by was a little promontory of rock jutting out into the sea. As one stood at a certain point, facing west, a recess in the rocks made the upstanding buttresses at either side look like a gate, through which the sea was seen. The rocks were at sunset a mass of absolutely jet black silhouette, and through this "gate" one saw the sea, absolutely clear cut. On the left lay the land, on the right the sea, and over all the glowing sky. On the land side, all between the onlooker and the sun was jet black. What a picture was presented! In the foreground some palm trees, with slender curved stems and graceful heads, stood out black against the glow of flaming colour. The palm tree always appeared to me

to be most beautiful at evening and night. During the day they were pretty, too, but seemed almost commonplace, but at dusk their tall slender stems and bushy heads, silhouetted against the sky, motionless in the still air or gently waving in a light breeze, gave them an air of romance, almost of mystery. Further away, Sidi-Bishr mosque raised its slender minaret in a beautifully sharp silhouette against the darkening rosy sky. In the distance twinkled the lighthouse of Alexandria. In front and on the right was the sea, and through the opening in the jet black rock one saw the sea, clear as crystal, blue as sapphire, a sharp definite horizon, and immediately over the deep, deep blue sea the blood-red sky. The colours merged from red to orange, purple, and so on, till the upper sky matched the sea. A beautiful glow o'erspread the eastern sky. One could only gaze in wonder and admiration, watching the beautiful picturesque silhouettes and the ever changing scene of riotous colour till the last gleam had died away and all was dusk, and the clear twinkling stars appeared.

M. J. RATTRAY.

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Scene Marseilles :—Time unknown. A young sub., with his mother, walking down Rue Comiébière, espies his major at a distance.

Young Sub.: "That is our major, Ma."

Ma.: "Indeed! And I suppose that the lady with him is his wife?"

Young Sub.: "H'm! well no—not quite. That's his emergency rations, Ma."

## BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS.

*By the Company.*

How to feed Mules	....	By Hocking.
How to play Football	....	By Riley.
How to Grouse	....	By Nobby.
How to read Wireless	....	By Pock.
How to Argue	....	By Rowe.
How to doctor Mules	....	By Balls.
How to rear Elephants	....	By Clarkson.
How to Sing	....	By Scotch.
How to keep Warm	....	By Currie.
How to keep Happy	....	By Smiler.
How to read Signs	....	By Lieut. Rattray.
How to Run	....	By Gawler.
How to capture a Bulgar	....	By Reeve.
		CORPL. GREEN.

## SING ME TO SLEEP.

Sing me to sleep, where the 'squitoes hum,  
 Trying to forget that elusive rum,  
 Thin is my bivouac, wet are my feet,  
 With nothing but bully and biscuits to eat.

Sing me to sleep, in some old shed,  
 Thousands of ants around my head ;  
 Hunting the centipedes out of my bed ;  
 And cursing the heat, blue and red.

Far, far, from Doiran I long to be,  
 Where Bulgar snipers can't pot at me ;  
 Pity me crouching where the snakes creep,  
 Waiting for sergeant to kiss me to sleep.

Sing me to sleep, I shan't care a rap,  
 For I'm quite convinced that the " Balkan Tap "  
 Has visited here, and come to stay,  
 How long with me, I cannot say.

PIONEER H. MILLER.

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#### A FEW OF MY EXPERIENCES DURING THE " GREAT WAR."

In writing of one's experiencies and happenings, in the army especially, during a great war—such as we all hope never to witness again—we need to trace our steps back to the days of civil life and the early part of the war.

I was myself a voluntary "special constable" as well as working at my civil occupation. It was then that I first realised, not only what war really was, but saw the great responsibility which rested on every Briton and the need for us to be up and doing.

While I was doing my duty at the quay at Folkestone—sometimes until three o'clock in the morning—I witnessed the sights of homeless families—aye, by the thousands—together with fathers, sons and brothers, maimed for life. Seeing these sights, as I did day after day, I could not rest until I had thrown off the yoke of civil life, sacrificing home and all that a good home really means—with children ever dear—to serve



my King and Country. Many said: "Why did he go?" but I very much question if they are saying that to-day. I can say, and gladly, too, "Why did you wait?" It was 'Xmas in the year 1914, when I first made my way to the recruiting office, having first made the necessary enquiries beforehand. I was met there by a very obliging sergeant, who told me my height and chest measurement as well as weighing me, without even requiring the usual "dole" of a penny. After having signed the necessary forms and documents of character and trade experience, I was marched off to the doctor—there to be stripped, thumped and closely examined, even to the colour of my eyes and hair—this, too, I might mention for the benefit of the reader, was quite free. From this part of the none too pleasant ordeal—after having taken the necessary oaths, etc. and the usual shilling as a sort of start in life—I took a journey to the head depot of the R.E's—this also quite free; so we start off well, with no expense, the life of a soldier during "The Great War of Nations." I well remember my first night's "kip"—to use the army phrase—and its preparation. Large sacks were given to my mates and myself, and smaller ones to serve as pillows, in which we had to pack a special kind of feathers supplied by the army—long thin ones they were—straw—and cause a good deal of fun, for if you got over anxious to fill your bag to its capacity you would have the unpleasant experience of finding yourself on the floor, as you would not sink down in the middle, as you would with the feathers the ducks supply us with in civil life, and which I might mention, I have seen all too few of whilst traversing the mossy hills of the

Balkans. I say mossy, because it sounds better and because so many do not realise the nature of this country, but I will endeavour to deal with the latter later on. While I must not dwell too much on this point, owing to the limited space, I would like to point out that other beds are supplied by the Army as well as the thin feather type. I remember when this company first went to France, after having marched with our full kits for many miles, during that famous "Battle of Loos," we came to a halt at night, weary and tired and having to move on again early in the morning, lay down in a ploughed field where we were, sleeping probably the best sleep we ever had, not fearing the wild animal life that might be lurking about, or rats or the like, crawling over us. It was my first sleep in the open and one I will probably never forget. There is yet another form of bed on which we often laid our weary heads, one perhaps that brings us nearer to home life than any other, especially when we have been eager to accommodate our friends—the floor.

In some parts of Northern France the villages were overrun with rats, especially in one called Herleville, which at one time had been occupied by the Germans, and now, battered to the ground, with its beautiful church a mass of ruins. I have a certain amount of pleasure in remembering that, in spite of its discomforts, Tommy's rough and sometimes trying life always has its humorous side. We have had a good deal of sport in rat hunts, but when you get about a dozen running about your billet, disturbing your slumbers, the reader may guess a soldier's life is not all honey in war time.

Before I leave this billet, I would just like to mention my first experience of a supposed gas attack and the shock I received. My section of our company had all retired to rest, myself and a few others having mounted guard for the night. I had finished my "beat," and had turned in our battered guard-room to have a warm by the fire. The cold night air had sharpened my appetite, so I sought to make myself a slice of dripping and toast, and was about to enjoy this sumptuous meal when, alas! there came from the dark still night a hoarse and stern alarm—"Gas." In an instant the guard was out—our officers and the boys were called, but alas! they had forgotten the teaching of their younger days—to have their lamps trimmed—consequently all was confusion. There were no candles or light of any description—some were tumbling over the more heavy sleepers who had not yet risen to the occasion—others in "the *melée*" had dressed themselves in some one else's trousers, or had taken the wrong gas helmet, and as these are made in different sizes, those who are acquainted with this useful head gear, can guess the discomfort of the unfortunate individuals. There were groans and gaspings—still we lived. Officer, always alive to any emergency, lined us up outside the billet, and while we looked askance at one another, during our ghastly wait, our officer had made the necessary enquiries, and returned with the "All's well." But all was not well with me, for when I returned to the fireside my toast and dripping had "gone west" by some unseen hand.

Whilst dealing with the sidelights of our experiences, I trust I may be excused for looking back for a few

moments to the time of leaving "Blighty," and our entering on French soil. It is said that a good soldier never turns back—he makes mistakes sometimes. The training of ourselves as sappers took many months of strenuous work, which in peace time would probably have taken at least two years, to make a proficient sapper. We touched on all the various branches connected with engineering—such as pontoon and trestle bridging, hurdle making, knot tying, the making and timing of hand grenades, and the general use of explosives. All kinds of field works were gone through as well as the general drills and rifle practice. Having made ourselves proficient in this work we assembled in our training camp at Sutton Veny at about ten o'clock at night, in the month of September, 1915, ready for the fray, in full kit and the best of spirits. Arriving at the railway station at Warminster, we found all bustle; officers rushing here and there to see that everything was securely packed, even to ourselves, for on excursions such as these we are securely packed, especially when you are about to leave the train and find you are dragging part of your mate's kit with you. Arriving at Southampton about midnight, feeling somewhat tired, we made for the coffee stall, before resting for the night, or rather waiting for daylight to appear. The following day we boarded the ship that was to take us to ——— and what will probably be the greatest events of our lives. We had not been long on our journey when a sudden calm came on our outward appearance, but a storm was raging within us—I say us, because I can the better tale unfold. We were rolling and groaning, many wasting all the good things they had



received in "Blighty." Others of a more generous nature looked over the angry deep, feeling more content to feed the fishes. I remember it was bitterly cold and I was feeling right bad ; the ship tossed about like a log. It was about eleven at night when one of my more fortunate mates sought me out of the huddled heaps lying on the top deck ; he found me huddled up among coils of ropes, scarcely daring to move. Says he, " there is some cocoa inside, go and have some, it will warm you." I made my way to the cabin and managed to get half-way, when something gave way from under me. I became dizzy, lost my appetite, and returned to the open to gaze at the stars, almost hoping the sea would swallow me up. There I remained until we cast anchor at Le Havre, when our pride was somewhat smitten when told by the captain we were the worst lot of sailors that had boarded his boat. As I am unable to deal with all the little incidents that happened during our few months' stay in France, I will get further afield, where most of my time has been spent, leaving those with a more descriptive mind to deal with more important happenings.

Our next voyage was a much longer one and of a more pleasant character, travelling as we did several thousand miles from "Blighty" on one of the famous American liners named the *Megantic*. It was probably the trip of our lives ; having a good passage and no sea-sickness aboard made it possible for us to pass our time in all kinds of sport—tug of war and physical drill—to keep us fit. Not having travelled abroad before on the Mediterranean Sea, I was particularly struck with the sunrise and sunset, and often would watch what I

considered a truly magnificent sight. In about eight days we arrived at our destination but were prevented from landing for several days, so we were able to witness for the first time the ancient city of Salonica. It was a fine sight to witness the white buildings and the minarets towering high above them. High up in the skies could be seen the snowy top of Mount Olympus.

On landing early in December, 1915, we were somewhat taken aback by the rough mud and stone buildings, so different from our own well finished houses and shops and channelled pavements. The Greeks had not learned the art of sanitation, for you would see the mud heaps and refuse from the roads piled up outside the entrances to the shops. If some of our chemists were to visit the druggists' stores here I think they would have a rude shock.

One thing this war has surely done for Greece, is to see the advantage of good sanitation. They have been able to witness this ever since British troops first entered their country, and in which the Royal Engineers have played so great a part. Making roads and comfortable housing for the troops, building field bakeries and field kitchens—where thousands of loaves are daily turned out—are truly a few of the huge undertakings necessary for the upkeep of a large army.

One of our first camps was on the Monastir Road, and later, in December, we moved to the plains of Langaza, or perhaps more correctly described as the Plains of the Thessalonians, where St. Paul first commenced his teachings. Here we set to work in real earnest, working long hours in snow and rain. We stuck to it like true Britons, for we were told that it

was necessary to have the defences of Salonica secure as early as possible. Those who know the true nature of this country and have seen the work that has been done since the British troops first came here, can rightly judge what they have done in the Balkans.

There are many things I would have liked to touch upon, but I hope others may deal with them, that you, my reader, may have a full account of the deeds executed by those whom you have entrusted to defend the "rights of nations" and our dear Home-land. The question has often been asked, "What is the Salonica Army doing?" If they could have witnessed the gallant deeds under a hellish "barrage"—through deep ravines and nullahs, and over steep, rocky hills, many hundred feet above sea level—carried out by our brave comrades in all branches of the service, they would stand aghast at having sent out such a hideous question. I was talking only a few days ago to some who had fought in France, in some of the great battles there, and they told me that they would much prefer to be fighting there, than to be buried, as it were, among the steep hills of Salonica—faced as we are by two deadly enemies—malarial fever and all that modern science can produce in the destruction of human life. But this is not all; in the summer time, with a tropical heat, the country abounds with mosquitoes, snakes, flies, insects and frogs, which will often keep you awake at night, together with the buzzing of mosquitoes if you chance to be camped near a spring or nullah; this alone is trying in such heat.

When cutting through huge rocks—like granite itself—the making of roads, mule tracks, dug-outs and

mines, etc., have taken months of strenuous work, and many have broken down under its constant strain, but thanks to our splendid hospitals and nurses we have been built up and strengthened to carry on, I trust, to the end.

I have been with my company—the good old —th Field Company—on most of the fronts here. Wherever you go you see ridge after ridge, as far as the eye can see, and when you reach the summit of one range of hills, you see yet another, with deep nullahs and winding tracks, and it is in this difficult country we have been working and fighting for over two years ; and although our work is not yet finished, I am proud to say of the “ boys ” of my company, that they have won a fair share of decorations for valourous deeds on the field of battle.

I had often wondered why war was so costly, but since I have witnessed the huge transports of material and the necessary equipment of a soldier—the clothing and the feeding of troops, hundreds of shells and guns, etc., the building of camps, stores and observation posts, and all the necessary field works for defensive purposes—one can easily see how expensive war is.

There are many incidents which I should like to mention, but time and space will not allow. There are one or two I might touch upon, namely, how we overcome little difficulties of cooking, washing, etc. When we are in the front line water is sometimes difficult to obtain, especially for the purpose of washing clothes. It was only a few days ago I went to obtain some water a considerable distance away from camp—from a pool I knew to be in one of the ravines—but I found it had

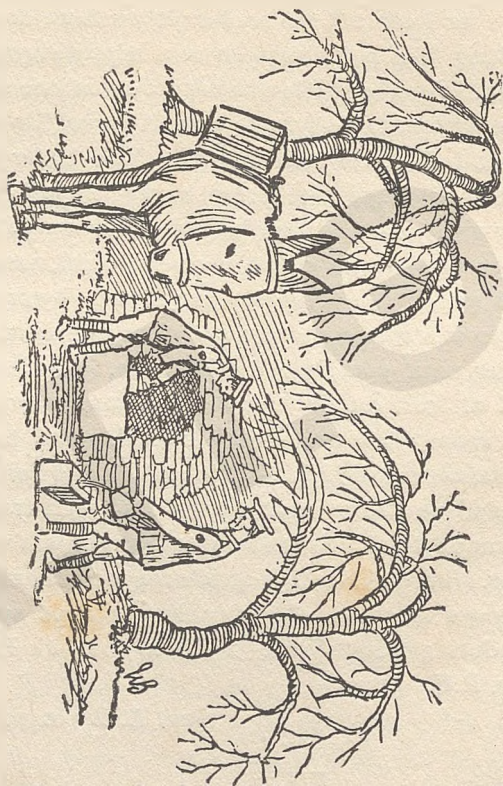


frozen several inches thick. My clothes had to be washed somehow, so I set about and smashed the ice into blocks, so that I could bring them back to my dug-out, where I soon made enough water to do the necessary evil : for I can tell the reader although we do our own washing, it is not looked on as a happy event by any means. Another little difficulty that at one time seemed insurmountable was " iron ration day," which consists of bully beef and biscuits. The latter has always been a sore point with most of the " boys," more especially with those who have broken or have only a few teeth, but a very simple recipe has been found, namely a " trench pudding." This pudding is made by crushing the biscuits into a powder and then mixing them with water until you have a stiff paste. Raisins or any kind of fruit can be mixed, even jam, which is probably more often used—not Tickler's—and turns out to be a sweet pudding. Tie in a cloth and boil for an hour and you have what the " boys" call trench pudding, and I think the reader would say it was very appetising. I trust this short article may remind many of us, in days to come, of many happy days spent together during this " Great War," in the —th Field Company, R.E.

SPR. A. BUNGARD.

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One night for a bit of a stunt,  
 An R.E. Sub. went in a punt ;  
     But when morning dawned,  
     'Tis said that he mourned  
 For the gun that he went out to hunt.



## PROVERBS (UP-TO-DATE).

A mule in the hand is worth two down the cud.  
 Go to the M.O. in time, and have a No. 9.  
 A boil in the dixie is worth two on the neck.  
 All is not rum that is put in the jar (Quinine).  
 Leave of absence makes the heart grow brighter.  
 More mail less grouse.  
 Half a loaf is better than biscuits.  
 Look after the Pip-Squeaks, the H.E.'s will look after  
 themselves.  
 He's a wise man who knows his own blankets.  
 Uneasy is the man who wears a stripe.  
 It's a short lane that has no mud in it.  
 There'd be many a slip 'twixt quinine cup and lip  
 if there was'nt an officer on parade.  
 It's not all shiny buttons that glitter.  
 Uniform does not make the soldier.  
 Blessed is he who hath a contented and happy mind,  
 for he will surely not be found in the Balkans.  
 Let the evening's enjoyment bear the morning's  
 reflection (specially applicable to those who fared well  
 but not wisely on Christmas night).

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When we journey'd up country to fight,  
 We were careful to keep out of sight ;  
     Till we reached Kalinova,  
     And thought we were in clover,  
 But we had to go wiring at night.

# “ WATTLE AND DAUB.”

It is extraordinary how difficult it is for people to remember simple R.E. terms. For instance—an officer of the “ umpteenth ” Battalion of the Wheatwall Regiment, gave instructions through the usual channels—C.S.M., Sgt., etc., and this is how it went :—

*Officer—*

For the dug-out roofs, use C.G.I.,  
You'd better instruct, Sergt. Forbe,  
To improve both sides and front,  
And to use Wattle and Daub.

*C.S.M.—*

The top 's to be made of iron,  
The sides—“ Now what did he say ? ”  
Something like puddle and wabble,  
Anyhow—it's only hurdles and clay.

*Sergt.—*

Shove along with the b—— dug-outs,  
You're in charge of the work, Corpl. Spud !  
Use corrugated tin as the rainproof,  
And the sides to be branches and mud.

*Cpl.—*

Now boys, regardin' these dug-outs,  
For the top use wobbly tin,  
For sides use twigs and branches,  
With puddle and slush plastered in.

*Tommy—*

“ Halways the same ! want of Hedication ! ”  
“ Our N.C.O.'s know nowt ! ” said Borb,  
He don't know the R.E. hexpressions,  
He should a' said—wattle and daub.

N. BATEMAN



## SALONICA.

(*Impressions on landing in the winter of 1915-16*).

At last we had arrived at Salonica—the ancient Thessalonica—where St. Paul preached on his first mission, in answer to the appeal of “Come over into Macedonia and help us,” and still called Thessaloniki by the Greeks. Salonica, the queen of the Ægean, the coveted prize for centuries of Austria and every Balkan state, lay before us. We also had come on a mission. To us also had come the cry, “Come over into Macedonia and help us,” from the stricken Serbs, and only a short while before the first British troops had landed in the town, which has had such a chequered history and been the scene of so many invasions. Only a few years previously it had passed from centuries of Turkish rule—or misrule—to that of the Greek. I doubt if Salonika loved one more than the other.

The view from aboard ship in the harbour is very fine indeed. Though quay accommodation is limited, the harbour itself is spacious, and now that Salonika was the base of an army, an enormous number of vessels rode at anchor. The city, with a stone built quay wall, extends down to and along the water's edge for over a mile; and for a couple of miles in continuation to the S. East, extends the suburb of Kalamaria. Unlike most Western European towns one of the principal streets is that along the quay side, and some of the principal hotels in the town face the harbour, just across the road from the quay wall. At the eastern end of the quay is the famous “White Tower.” Once a grim Turkish dungeon, now with its gardens, it forms

as it were the "Hyde Park" of Salonika, for in this open space most of the public meetings in Salonika are held.

To the left-hand side of the harbour—facing the town—lie the marshes of the mouths of the River Vardar ; but on the N.W., North and East, Salonika is surrounded by hills—the town itself being built on the hillside—culminating in the wooded Mt. Kotos, which reaches an elevation of about 5,000ft. five miles east of the town, a natural rampart of defence. The ancient part of the city, now the Turkish quarter, is the highest point of the town, and the ancient fortifications, the old forts, and battlemented stone walls of the citadel still remain.

On looking round what a scene was presented to one's view ! Behind to the south lay the open Gulf, with the long boom extending for two miles across the harbour. The harbour itself was laden with shipping. Allied battleships rode at anchor with guns trained on the town—for already Greece was proving a treacherous "friend"—busy pinnances plied about, black transports discharged their loads, and along the quay side were hundreds of the small vessels of Greece ranged side by side. To the immediate west of the harbour the Vardar marshes ; in front, the city nestling on the hillside surrounded by hills. The varied colour of the houses, some blue, some red, some white, some yellow, the trees visible on the streets and round the mosques up the hill side, and the scores of slender graceful minarets, presented a beautiful picture. And on looking further west was seen a mighty snow-clad mountain range, extending for miles through Greece, rising ever

higher and higher till it culminated in the mighty Mount Olympus, towering snow-clad in the clouds, almost 10,000 feet high, about 40 miles to the S.W. of the city. Olympus, the home of the Gods—the seat of Thessalian Jove—what an imposing sight it was, with its precipitous crags now snow-clad, its hoary head lost in the clouds, or sometimes appearing above them. No wonder the Ancient Greeks assigned it as the home of the Gods, for it dominates all around, it is imposing in its majesty and grandeur, and the dwellers on the Olympian heights would literally be dwelling in the heavens, for does not its peak rise above the clouds. Even at that distance the great mountain seemed to overwhelm the city, to be the main thing, and thrust its greatness upon one. And what a view at sunset! The sun shining through the clouds lights up his peak till the snow is a rosy tinge, and as it sinks lower and lower, its horizontal rays tinge peak after peak, and the summits of the range seem on fire, with the great mountain above all. It may be remarked here that this is the season of the year to see Olympus, when he is snow-clad and the air is clear, for during the summer, alas! the heat haze obscures him from view, and during summer one usually looks in vain for his towering peak—the dull, misty-like heat haze has hidden it.

These wonderful mountains, the extensive harbour, and the multi-coloured city with its ancient walls and citadel, and beautiful minarets, clinging to the hill-side and extending down the hill to the water's edge, and the mountains behind, was one of the finest views I had seen.

On landing in the town, after having admired the

beautiful view, and expecting the city to be equally worthy of admiration, one receives a rude shock. Salonika is a whited sepulchre. The typical smell of the Eastern port immediately greets one, and squalor and filth abound. One can quite imagine that in the baking heat of summer Salonika is not a very salubrious place. The streets, except along the quay side, are narrow and very badly paved, and the footpaths are very bad. Their paving is either so smooth that one walks with difficulty, or there is none. Bad holes, filled with mud and filth, are frequent in the streets. The city boasts of an electric tramway along the quay and principal streets. Along the quay wall, as already mentioned, are drawn up the small Greek coasting vessels, and these unload their cargoes on the footpath of the street, whence they are conveyed by men or wagons. The quay-side accommodation for large vessels is exceedingly limited, and many of the Allied transports have to do much unloading by lighters, as they ride at anchor in the harbour.

At right angles to the quay and extending from it up the hillside is the principal street of the town—Venizelos Street—named after the great Greek statesman who was Premier when Salonika was wrested from the Turk. The upper half of this street is one large arcade, under which the various shops display their goods. The lower end, near the quay, widens to about two or three times the width of the street proper, and this is known as the “Place de la liberté.” Here, looking on to the square is “Floca’s,” one of the principal restaurants of the town, and a famous rendezvous for members of the Allied forces in the town. In fine weather scores



of tables are put out in the square, and here, while enjoying a cup of tea or sipping wine or beer, one can watch the varied throng pass by. During the war Salonika is indeed a cosmopolitan town. Here one sees the British "Tommy," the French "Poilu," or French black colonial troops, and the Serbian soldier in his smart uniform walking through the streets—later the dapper Italian and large Russian added to the variety. Greek officers and soldiers also, of course, frequent the streets. And to this truly international military array is added an almost international civilian one. The large number of mosques and minarets bear witness to a large Mahommedan population under Turkish rule, and many still remain. The Turk in his fez and baggy trousers is often seen in the streets, and there is a large Turkish quarter. There is also a large Jewish population—the descendants of Spanish Jews who were expelled from Spain by the Inquisition. As usual, much of the trade and commerce of the city is in the hands of these children of Abraham. They still speak Spanish, and that language is freely spoken in Salonika; in fact it is often the best language in which to do shopping, most of the commerce being in the hands of these Spanish Jews. Here one sees them clad in their Jewish gabardines, walking along the streets or seated in a shop, and here an artist could get many an excellent model for a Shylock. Here, too, is seen the Balkan peasant, Greek, Serb, Bulgar or Turk, for all Balkan races mingle in Macedonia, and each state claims it as her own. Perhaps they have come with tobacco from some far distant village, or only one outside the town, to buy a few articles. Clad

in their peculiar and typical garments, they are an interesting addition to the flowing crowd. It is indeed a varied throng that passes before one's eyes.

The Rue Ignatia runs right through the town from west to east, about half way up and parallel to the quay. At the eastern end is the Arch of Galerius, which spans the street. Though now partially ruined, it is still a beautiful erection, with sculptured pictures cut in the solid stone.

At the western end of this street is a busy crossing place, from whence streets and roads radiate in five directions, and now known to the British armies as "Piccadilly Circus." From here lead the roads from Salonika to Monastir and Seres—the main roads to the front. It is along one of these roads that duty leads the British soldier in Macedonia to an exiled life in the mountains, after a visit of perhaps a few hours' duration to the town, which he will not see, perhaps, for a year or even two years—as is the case with many of this company—and Salonique with its dirt and varied throng is left far behind.

M. J. RATTRAY.

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\* \* NOTE.—The above is of Salonika on our landing two years ago. Now, of course, most of the town has been destroyed by fire. Starting in the Turkish quarter, it spread across Rue Ignatia, and has destroyed practically all the city between it and the sea, and from west of the arcaded Venizelos Street—now no more—and the White Tower. Now it is a mass of ruins and twisted iron girders. Let us hope that the fire has cleansed it and burned away the dirt, and that the new Salonika, rising like a phoenix from its ashes, will be a real Queen of the *Ægean*, with a beautiful harbour, laden with vessels bearing merchandise from a renewed and fertile, peaceful Macedonia—a city worthy of the majestic towering Olympian Mount, and scene, that lies before it,



# CONVERSATION BETWEEN SMALL ARMS AND R.E.

Bomb.—“ Good morning, Sapper.”

Spr.—“ Good morning, how goes it ? ”

Bomb.—“ Oh ! not so bad, you know.”

Spr.—“ Some rough weather you’ve brought up with you, I must say.”

Bomb.—“ Yes, it’s rather bad. It took some pulling up the hill, I can tell you.”

Spr.—“I’ll bet it did. What have you got for us this morning?”

Bomb.—“Barbed wire.”

Spr.—“What! again. Is that all they have down below?”

Bomb.—“Nothing much else, barring some pickets. What are you going to do with all this wire you have here?”

Spr.—“This lot! Oh! The Infantry puts it up every night, and Johnny comes and calmly takes it away.”

Bomb.—“It appears to be something like that anyway.”

Spr.—“Did you get a ‘Balkan’ this morning?”

Bomb.—“No. There was’nt any up when I was down there.”

Spr.—“Have you heard any rumours knocking about?”

Bomb.—“Well, yes. There is a rumour that we are going to ——”

Spr.—“It would’nt be so bad if we were, would it?”

Bomb.—“No. It would be all right for a change, you know. My word, but it’s cold this morning.”

Spr.—“Yes, it is rather nippy, is’nt it?”

Bomb.—“Here! Is that G.C. over there with the white top?”

Spr.—“Yes. and that is P.C. to the left of it.”

Bomb.—“I didn’t think they were so far apart till just now.”

Spr.—“Did you hear them banging away over there last night?”

Bomb.—“Ah! Who was it making all the row?”

Spr.—“Why our people copped one of Johnny’s wagons on the hop, and blew it to H——.”



Bomb.—“ Is the lake frozen this morning ?”

Spr.—“ No. Can't you see the ripple on the water.”

Bomb.—“ Oh ! Ah ! But isn't it cold this morning, eh ? Have you a fire going in t' dug-out ?”

Spr.—“ Yes, a bit of one. Come in and make yourself warm.”

(Enter Bomb. and Driver.)

Dr.—“ Eh ! Bomb. haven't they got a cushy little place ? These R.E.'s don't half know how to do it.”

Bomb.—“ Ah ! I wish ours was like this—a nice fire, beds, and plenty of grub. I tell you they live like lords.”

Spr.—“ Oh ! It's all right you fellows talking, you know.”

Dr.—“ Have you any 'Bachsheesh' bread you could give us ?”

Spr.—“ Here you are. Cut thee sel' some off that and here's a bit of cheese to go with it.”

Dr.—“ Thanks, mate. This is the first bite since 5-30 this morning. I expect you R.E.'s always have a good fire—plenty of wood in the dump.”

Spr.—“ I know there's plenty of wood, but it's all booked down to us, you know.”

Bomb.—“ Who did you play last week ?”

Spr.—“ Why, the Bakers ! And we didn't half give 'em socks—winning 6—0. Of course we have had biscuits ever since. How did you go on ?”

Bomb.—“ Us ? Why we made a draw of it—put one or two of 'em in dock.”

Spr.—“ A bit of a rough do then, eh ?”

Bomb.—“ Well, you know, they came the old game—once too often.”

Spr.—“ When are you going home then ? You are next for leave, aren't you ? ”

Bomb.—“ Yes, I am, but it's been cancelled, worse luck.”

Spr.—“ We look like getting home some day at that rate, don't we ? ”

Bomb.—“ Never mind, it won't last for ever you know.”

Spr.—“ No, I don't suppose it will—but I'm beginning to think so.”

Bomb. (after being in front of fire)—“ Ah! that 's much better. I'm nice and warm now. Have you made out the receipt.”

Spr.—“ Yes. Here you are.”

(Exit dug-out).

Spr.—“ Any fags down your canteen ? ”

Bomb.—“ I believe they have. Do you want any ? ”

Spr.—“ If you can manage some, you might send a couple of tins up.”

Bomb.—“ Alright ! I will try, anyhow. Well, I think I'd better be off now.”

Spr.—“ Right Ho ! Don't forget ! ”

Bomb.—“ No. I shan't forget you. Well, so-long.”

Spr.—“ So-long.”

SPR. A. E. RILEY.

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From Marseilles out to far Salonique,  
The passage across was unique ;  
But we stopped in the Bay,  
Waiting diplomatic play,  
Between British, the French, and the Greek.

## THE PAINS OF PAYNE.

The Balkans is a lovely place,  
At least so people say ;  
But I've been here a decent while,  
And long to get away.

When I landed in Salonika,  
I thought it wasn't bad ;  
But when I got up country,  
I knew that I'd been had.

The hills are something awful,  
To climb them is hard work,  
And if you ride a donkey,  
It's enough to make him shirk.

As soon as I got up country,  
They gave me a pair of " mokes,"  
But next time they make me a present,  
I hope they'll give me smokes.

As smokes are sometimes useful,  
But I'm hanged if donkeys are,  
For of all four-legged animals,  
They're the stubbornest, by far.

They say that Job had patience,  
And, by jove, he'd want it too ;  
If ever he drove donkeys,  
And especially—my two.

A mule is a noble animal,  
At least, so people say ;  
But all my two are good for  
Is to eat some corn and hay.

I don't know where they come from,  
 And I'm sure that I don't care ;  
 The only thing I wish is  
 That they were both back there.

The " forage king " is desperate,  
 And says they get " Bachsheesh,"  
 But rather than I'd fuss them up  
 I'd see the devils freeze.

Before I became a driver  
 I was quite a decent lad ;  
 But since I've been with donkeys  
 I've gone right to the bad.

When I get back to " Blighty,"  
 Which I hope to do some day,  
 If I see a donkey coming  
 I'll go the other way.

After the war is over,  
 And donkey driving 's done ;  
 I hope they'll give me—my two,  
 And five rounds in my gun.

Then I'll put them out of action,  
 And think it a good job done ;  
 If there 's Drivers in the next war,  
 I'll watch that I'm not one.

DRIVER A. PAYNE.

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We are the boys who do something all round in  
 Macedonia.



## MACEDONIA IN TRANSITION.

Macedonia is a country with a long and varied history, occupied as it has been from very early times by a comparatively civilised population.

The outstanding feature of its early history is the son of King Philip of Macedon, Alexander the Great. With unlimited ambition and a genius in warfare—that has never been surpassed—this youth conquered in his day the great empire of Egypt and most of the near East. Thus did Macedonia become a centre of interest to the then civilised world. Cassander, a general of Alexander's, is said to have married the Emperor's sister, Thessalonica, and founded the town of Salonica in 315 B.C. Since that time, in spite of the many vicissitudes that the country has undergone, Salonica has prospered. It was visited by St. Paul, and it was to its inhabitants that he wrote his famous Epistle to the Thessalonians.

In the middle ages several important events took place which had much to do with the rise of the town. Foremost was the expulsion of a number of Jews from Spain, who founded a colony in Salonica and brought with them the Spanish language. Of all classes and occupations, they carried with them a sound business capacity, which has done much to give the town a place among the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. Before the last two Balkan wars Salonica and the district around was a Turkish possession, but then passed into Greek hands. Many remains of the Turk are thus still to be found, especially in outlying villages.

The North-East of the Gulf of Salonica is a fine

natural harbour, covered from the West as it is by mountain ranges and the massive Olympus. From the East, Kara Barun juts out and covers the entrance from that quarter. The town is situated at the head of the gulf, and in many ways it is most excellently placed. Thus essentially Salonica is a port, and although the quayside accommodation is limited, it could be made large enough for all requirements.

Of architectural interest the Arch of Galerius is worthy of examination. It is curious to see this massive ancient arch spanning the Odos Ignatia—the tram-cars running under it. The buildings most worthy of notice are the Bashcan Churches, of which several fine examples still exist, although the most splendid, St. Demetrius, suffered badly in the fire.

These Churches are early Christian, but on Turkish occupation; they were converted into mosques, and had added to them minarets and sometimes porticoes. Now that the Greek Church holds sway, most of them are Churches once more.

The port is well supplied with railways, there being three separate single lines running into the town. These allow of produce being brought in from a large area of country. Serbia and Northern Macedonia, Constantinople, Belgrade and Old Greece are all connected to Salonica by railways. Thus the town has dealt, or may be expected to deal, with copper, silk, wheat, maize, barley, dried fruits, tobacco and the like, and perhaps oil. Besides this there is a fishing industry, and a considerable trade with the islands.

The Balkan States are essentially mountain countries, and for the most part Macedonia occupies the

southern foothills of the inland mountain chains. Out into the Gulf of Salonica stretch great tracks of marsh and alluvium, the deltas of the Vardar, and many other streams of less importance. Travelling north, from this flat and often flooded area, to the west of the town, rolling country stretching to the first line of hills is covered. Deep nullahs in the alluvium intersect the country. The hills themselves are metamorphic, and stretch from the Vardar across Macedonia and the North of Chacidice. They have few practicable gaps in them for roads and railways, and reach a maximum altitude at Mount Kotos (3,500 feet). The Seres Road goes over the Derbend, the Constantinople railway and the Sarigol Road make use of the Galiko gap at Narish. The Monastir Railway, to which is connected the Katerina Railway, crosses the Vardar, and follows the line of lakes. The third railway keeps closely to the Vardar Valley right up to Uskub. The eastern road out of Salonica is taken through Hortakoj, on the slopes of Mount Kotos, and joins up with Stavros.

On the north side this line of hills descends steeply into the wide Langaza Plain, which is nearly at sea level, and for the greater part of its length is occupied by Lakes Langaza and Besik, which drain into the Gulf of Orfano, near Stavros. Beyond this pretty and extremely fertile valley lies the second hill barrier, the Besik Dag with its east on the Gulf of Orfano, the Krusa Balkan with its west on Lake Doiran, and the hills to the west of Doiran Village, culminating in the Dub, and extending to the Vardar at Karasouli.

The next depression is a series of lake basins and drainage valleys, which lie to the south of the true

Balkan mountains. This line follows the lower Struma Valley, with Lakes Tahinos and Butkovo, Lakes Doiran, Ostrovo, Prespa and Ochrida. Towering above these low lying marshy districts are mountains in the true sense of the word. These run in a series of chains from the Adriatic to the Mediterranean at Kavalla. To the east of Monastir lies the range of Kajmakalan and the Dobropolje. Next come the bold and rugged pyramids of the Marianska Planina, then the gap where the Vardar cuts through the hills on its southern course. Again to the east are the Belasica Planina, an imposing wall towering over the Struma Valley. The boundaries of Greece and Serbia and of Greece and Bulgaria follow the crest of these hills, and the meeting place of the three countries is marked by a tiny white Guardhouse on the Nicolice spur. Off the eastern end of the range the Struma finds a passage through the mountains. At this point Fort Rupel is situated. Beyond Fort Rupel and Demir Hissar are the lower ranges of Cengel Dag, Sharlija Planina and Smiruitza Planina. These mountains form a natural barrier, and communications between places on opposite sides of them is only possible with comparative ease by river gorges, such as the Cerna, the Vardar and the Struma. Moreover for purposes of defence from an attack from the south, these commanding positions are covered by low lying marshy valleys and a number of lakes.

These chains run up to 8,000 feet on the east, with the Marianska 6,000—7,000 and the Belasica 5,000—6,000. North, across yet more valleys, are the Rila and the Rhodope mountains, 9,000 to 10,000 feet.



Thus, in going from south to north, range after range is encountered, each divided from the last by deep cut valleys, each range higher in summits and average altitudes than the last.

The only routes that have any pretence to up-to-date methods of travel are the river gaps, which are very few in number, and it is these that have been used for roads and railways. For the rest it is either man on foot or on horse with his baggage on person or on pack.

As far as I have seen, Macedonia consists chiefly of metamorphic rocks. Traces of volcanic action are frequently found. There is a great paucity of minerals—ore and fossils, and no traces of unaltered sedimentary rocks have come to my knowledge, excepting alluvium. Hill features and ravine sections show chiefly schists of various kinds, such as mica with garnets, hornblende, chlorite, white sugar loaf and grey marbles, quartzite, white or tinged with hematites or limonite, often in much shattered veins. Slates of poor quality occur occasionally. The Igneous were chiefly in dykes, and are for the most part intermediate, or basic volcanic rocks. Marble often occurs in distinctive hills, such as Deve Kran. Quartzite often forms outstanding landmarks and hill features.

Many districts are of particular interest. One, for instance, has a very large outcrop of volcanic ash, with some volcanic agglomerate. This region is intersected by large numbers of greenstone veins and has several very prominent porphyry dykes. The rocks form bold rugged hills, which give the Vardar gorge much beauty. Another feature of interest is a line of rounded andesite hills. The Krusa Balkan, a very fertile district, is

essentially mica schist with garnet common, and intersected by innumerable veins of milky quartzite. Volcanic rocks do not occur, but are uncommon in this district. Serpentine Talcs are found in this region. Copper has been found associated with porphyry, and volcanic tuff; graphite, with a new volcanic dyke intersecting an extremely fine grained mica schist; manganese with quartzite. Red and yellow colourations, due to iron, are common in all rocks. Kaolin and magnesite of good quality occur.

The distinctive feature of the plains and valleys is the alluvium, consisting of loam, running to sand or clay with occasional gravel beds. The many streams have cut these deposits into deep steep sided nullahs, and small runnels have carved out bold bluffs and features of great variety and fineness of detail. Roots of trees and stone beds often have made a rude capping, and pilasters and pyramids been formed. The steepness and depth of these nullahs, cut as they are, often from land of fairly uniform easy slope, are startling, and greatly impede communication. The most important fact relating to the alluvial soil, from an economic point of view, is its richness and fertility.

The landscape of the foothills of Macedonia is wild in the extreme. The hills are steep but rounded, and cut up by innumerable ravines—steep, rough and precipitous. The plains and valleys are intersected by deep nullahs, often dry, except in time of flood.

Vegetation is sparse. Prickly scrub of all kinds is common. Thorn bushes abound, but most common of all is the scrub oak, which partially covers many of the hills. Thistles and brambles thrive. In specially

favoured spots or districts, there still remain trees. Oaks are the most usual, and at one time it is probable that large forests of these trees existed. Near a spring head and fountain it is usual to see a clump of large trees, such as oak, poplar, elm or plane. Willow trees line the banks of a few of the rivers. Beech scrub and stunted oak are of frequent occurrence. Well grown chestnut trees greatly improve certain districts.

In spite of these rare and beautiful reliefs, the main part of the country approaches a desert condition. Ruined villages and untended overgrown fields mark the passage of armies, and bring home to one the insecurity of life and prosperity in this unsettled country.

Beyond the lower hills the distant mountains form a striking and beautiful contrast. Bold, precipitous they are, with winter snow caps and wonderful serpentine ravine systems. In summer, when clear of snow, craggy summits and frowning rock walls stand forth a menace to the traveller, but still a lure. Olympus, the Marianska, and the Belasica are a joy for ever, with their multitude of foregrounds and middle distances. Rivers, lakes, rugged hills, groves of trees, and hill villages, all do their best to give the monarchs a fit setting.

The lakes, too, are fine—Langaza and Besik from the Derbend. Ardzan, with Kalabak wild and desolate in the extreme, and then the gem lake—Doiran, blue at times as the azure sky, set in its bold mountain bevel. with the village of white and red, clinging to the hill side on the water's edge, cannot be surpassed. Over these hills at eventide one sees a golden sky with violet velvet hills in the far distance ; or, off the lake's smooth

sheet, reflected hills and crimson sky, give colours far too rare to paint.

The great south flowing rivers of the Balkan States exhibit many points of scenic interest. The Vardar gorge, with Karasouli, is very picturesque. Through the rocky mass the river has forced its way. Steep ragged buttresses spring out of the river on either bank, leaving but small ledges for the passage of man or beast. Below the gorge the country is very flat and marshy, and the river has meandered at will in graceful sweeping curves.

The lower Struma Valley, with lakes Butkovo and Tahinos, is very pretty, and has the fine rock wall of the Belasica beyond. This valley is very fertile and most of it has been cultivated, but it has the reputation of being one of the worst spots in the world for malaria.

The deposits of sand and loam in the plains and valleys are very fertile, hence the staple industries in peace time are agricultural. Farms, isolated as they are in England, are uncommon in Macedonia, and the essential mode of life is the village community subsisting on the land. The reason for this arrangement of living in villages and trekking out to the land every day, is protection. This is borne out by all accounts of bandits and comtadjis. Some houses even are loop-holed, many have barred windows.

There are many favourable valleys in which the land is good, and the rainfall sufficient for a large variety of crops. Irrigation in a primitive way has sometimes been resorted to for watering small patches—chiefly mulberry orchards. Tobacco, maize, and the grape thrive exceedingly. Besides these, barley, wheat, beans,



peat and onions, fruit such as apricot, plum, pear, pomegranite and fig do well. The summer climate being rather arid, prickly plants and succulent varieties—melons, pumpkins, tomatoes, etc.—grow in abundance. The potato is said to have been grown successfully.

Silk was a flourishing industry, as the many mulberry orchards show. The native methods of agriculture are very primitive. The ox is the draught animal, and the ass the beast of burden.

The ground is tilled with a wooden plough generally drawn by oxen. The grain is threshed by an ox walking over it. It is winnowed by the breeze. Tobacco is sun dried and packed in bales. When matured it is some of the best of its kind in the world. The ass is used for all loads, where the ox wagon is not available or cannot pass; the commonest load is a man, often followed by his wife, walking and urging the beast to fresh exertions. In the fields small herds of tiny squat cows are to be seen. Moderate sized flocks of sheep, under the charge of the shepherd or of the owner, roam the hills and plains, wherever the scanty feed affords sufficient pasture. The goat, nevertheless, is the typical animal seen in herds, as it is more suited to the conditions of the country, on account of its being able to pick up a living where another animal would do badly. The wild pig is sometimes kept, and resembles the boar in many particulars. Fowls are common in villages, as are cats, and half-wild dogs are a pest in some districts. The country at one time undoubtedly had a much greater area wooded probably with oak, and its ravines and precipitous hills have always been

very wild. The scrub areas and overgrown low lying tracts afford good cover for many kinds of wild life. Wolves and wild pigs are to be found in remote districts. Fox, stoat, hare, partridge, goose, duck are common, and the game affords good shooting. There are many varieties of birds—hawks, magpies, wagtails, crows, pigeons, blue jays and finches are all common—the eagle is rare. Non-poisonous and semi-poisonous snakes are very common. Lizards and tortoises occur innumera- bly.

The worst annoyance and danger that has to be faced on the country is the plague of insects. Grasshoppers innocuous, but noisy, occur in numbers and kinds that might be described as impossible. Centipedes, scorpions and large spiders are unpleasant, but not very numerous ; fleas, lice and bugs have a natural home in the native houses. The black flies are awful. The mosquito is most dangerous and in many districts infects the body with a malignant type of malaria.

Many of the wild flowers are exquisite. Flower carpets are common. Bulbous plants such as crocus, cyclamen and orchids are apparently best suited to the climate. Some variety or another is in bloom for the greater part of the year.

Thus Macedonia has many attractions, but it has some really serious drawbacks. The summer heat is bad unless one can live in a good house. Black flies irritate all day, mosquitos do their damndest at night. Dust becomes choking at times, cold snaps and blizzards fall upon the land with short warning, and the great and sudden changes of temperature are excessively trying to those who have spent the summer in the

country. Vardar winds bring the bad weather and often attain the fury of an hurricane. Most of the disadvantages of the country are reflected in the population.

In the summer it is too hot to work, in the winter it is too cold. Moreover, why work hard to have one's goods destroyed or stolen ?

Macedonia is a country to travel through—to see, but not to live in ; a good place for a holiday, but a preposterous place to work in.

W. H. BROWN.

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#### MACEDONIAN NURSERY RHYMES.

“ Post corporal, post corporal, where have you been ? ”

“ Well—I will tell, seeing you are so keen,  
For mail to draw, from Snevce Green,  
And brought back nothing as you have seen.”

“ Quarter-master Sergeant, what have you to sell?”

“ Soldiers' Friend and tins of ' Blue Bell,'  
Slate pencils, crayons, a few dolls that sing,  
For you to play with till the school-bell doth ring.”

Hush-a-bye “ Johnny ” on Belashitza Range,  
If you are pushed off it will be strange,  
Nearly as queer, if August brings snow,  
Or Salonika Troops on furlough would go.

## THE BUNDLE.

In the early days of the great Balkan War barbed wire was in great demand. Shortly after coming into the line we advanced our position, taking up a line a few miles in advance of our original line. As there was no reason why "Johnny" should not be filled with a similar lust for progress, and come to take the same positions—in fact he did come along and got a nasty surprise after we had got into them—wiring was the order of the day—or rather of the night—and we had to work at top pressure for many nights getting our new front wired.

Before the forward move took place an "advanced dump" had to be made in front of our line, in a certain ravine in "No-man's land," so that the material should be near at hand if urgently required on moving out. The Dump was not to be created in any leisurely fashion; oh, no! "Dumps—R.E.—one," was to spring into existence in one night—even as a mushroom—with camouflage complete, so that any innocent "Johnny" on the prowl would stumble into the barbed wire and tear his breeches in it before he was aware of its existence.

Accordingly the mighty organisation of the British Army was set in motion. The Great Ones, seated in their offices, gave forth orders that one hundred pack mules should report to our Company at "1800 hours," to transport the said dump on their pack saddles to its appointed destination. Such is the perfect organisation of our Army that, lo, as if wafted thither by a



magician's wand, the hundred mules with harness and drivers complete reported at the appointed hour.

For some time previously the sappers had been putting the materials into bundles, and by 1800 hours—which been translated means 6 p.m.—two hundred loads of sandbags, French wire, staples, iron pickets, and barbed wire, etc., were neatly laid out on each side of the path, in a manner which would turn a sergeant-instructor green with envy, so neatly were they dressed.

It was estimated that the loading would be finished and the great forward trek started by 8 p.m., at which time it would be dark enough to go over the crest and down the other side to our appointed place in the scheme of things—a movement which would be disastrous in daylight, as “Johnny” had full observation of the forward slope. For a while all went well. By 7 p.m. about half the mules were duly loaded. Then the fun began. There are mules—and mules—a fact of which most members of the Salonika Force are painfully aware; and the operation of putting a pack-saddle on a mule does not thereby convert that moke into a pack-mule—paradoxical as it may seem to the uninitiated. As well might one put a saw and plane in the hands of a yokel and expect him to be a carpenter. The pack mule is a tradesman, a skilled worker among mules. But as on the human side during the war, so in this case, many unskilled workers were pressed into service. The skilled mules having no recognised Trade Union, could not lodge a protest against this dilution of unskilled labour, and even if they had, it would have been refused owing to “the exigencies of the Service”—magical clause! And the unskilled mule

who has not "served his time" at pack work does not take kindly to it. The touch of a pack load on his back gives him as much joy as does a tiger on the back of an elephant. As stated, all went well for a while. Bales of sand bags were loaded on mules as if they were being put in a railway truck. But when we got to the iron pickets and barbed wire things got more interesting. We did not know it at the time, but it transpired later, that most of the veteran pack mules had been loaded with sand bags, while the majority of those to be loaded with such enticing articles as iron pickets and barbed wire had never had a pack saddle on before. As the loaders approached, bearing the iron load in their arms, the suspicious animal would back away, thereby treading on the next bundle of pickets. The ringing sound of the iron added to his terror, thereby making him dance about on still more bundles. This performance, and the rattling of the iron, would make all the mules down the line cock their ears with a movement like a perfectly trained battalion coming to attention, and we could see a "wave" pass down the line as when a taut rope is struck. The mule would be pulled off his dancing platform up to the load again. Gingerly the loaders approached again. At the first touch of the load the mule would lash out—and it has to be seen to realise how a mule can lash out in any and every direction.

That load was dropped like a hot potato, and the onlookers and loaders scattered as if for their lives! This was repeated several times before the load was finally on, and Man was triumphant over beast, and

the conquered mule could jump to his heart's content with the load safely tied on his back.

But one pair of mules provided the "piece de resistance" of the show. On being introduced into the vicinity of the load they bolted along the hill, taking their driver with them. But he "stuck to it"—or them rather—and with much pulling brought them back. Several times the loaders stealthily approached and as often were scattered in all directions. Finally a detachment was told off to engage the enemy's front while the decisive attack was made on the flanks. A couple of men paid much attention to those mules, flirting and coquetting with them to an accompaniment of kindly "whoas," while a pair of men stealthily approached on each side with a pair of coils of barbed wire, and lo, almost before the mule was aware that it had touched him, with a veritable triumph of loading the coils were dropped on all the hooks at once, and the load was on! This was repeated in an equally masterly fashion with the second mule. But by that time, and before the surcingle strap which keeps the load firmly tied from shaking up and down was on, the mules had recovered from their initial amazement at being taken in by so simple a ruse. Like an arrow from a bow they bolted. Their driver was as helpless as if he had to contend with 20,000 horse power instead of two-mule power. Tied together with a chain madly they charged up the hill. The coils of barbed wire merely hanging by the pack ropes on the hooks, flapped like a pair of heavy wings on either side. As they flapped and the jolting loosed the ropes and the mules jostled together, the sharp barbs literally "spurred

them on." Bucking to free themselves of their tormentors only added to their torture, and in a frenzy the maddened animals dashed "hell for leather" across the hill, disappearing over the brow with the coils wildly flapping and goading them on. In a few moments a frightful commotion was heard, and we realized what had happened. The horse lines of a battery were situated in the next ravine. Dashing down the steep slope at breakneck pace the mules, even if they would, could not have checked themselves, and dashed wildly over the edge, right amongst the horses. The effect of this apparition—like a bolt from the blue in the still night—on the horses can be better imagined than described, and soon there was a frightful uproar. Myself and another officer went over the hill to see if the mules had cut themselves or the horses to bits in the tangle of wire. But when we came beyond the brow of the hill we stopped—and we looked—and we listened! The night air was "blue." There appeared the Gunner Sergeant Major at the door of his bivvy, surveying the scene of chaos. "Here's a b—— fine bundle," he exclaimed, "Where's that picquet? Asleep as usual. Look at them running away from the animals! Turn out the right half section," he bellowed. "What's that!" he roared, "Barbed wire!! Good God!!!" Realising that there are occasions in which discretion is the better part of valour, we retraced our steps and sent eight sappers to collect those eight coils of wire!

At length the wire and mules, none the worse for wear, were recovered. The obliging driver offered to bring two other mules in their place from his unit, but we besought him to take them out of our sight and



never let us see them again, and not, oh *not* to bring back two more like them—not to bring back any, as it was too late to wait any longer.

At length by midnight—how unwittingly we had counted on having the brutes loaded by 8 o'clock—about 90 of the mules were loaded, and a long string of mules, conveying the dump—90% complete—wound its way up the hillside. In the small hours the dump was made “according to plan,” camouflage and all, and as the first streaks of dawn lit up the eastern sky the last mule came back safely across the crest out of enemy view. As, dead tired, we rolled and stumbled, rather than walked down the hill to the camp, we rocked with laughter at the memory of the scene of pandemonium in the Gunner lines, and the Sergt. Major who found it too much for even his flow of language. Such are some of the incidents, which annoying as they may be at the moment they occur, go to relieve the monotony of life on the Macedonian hills.

M. J. RATTRAY.

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Scene:—The Langaza Plain in flood. The plain on each side of the embanked road being under about three feet of water. Officer arrives and finds 6 powerful artillery horses with a G.S. wagon—which had been drawing metal for road mending—plunging about madly in the water, and the driver endeavouring to control them.

Officer.—“What on earth are you doing there?”

Driver.—“They bolted from a donkey, sir.”

## DRIVERS' EFFORT.

There is a spot that's on the map,  
And I'm in it to my sorrow ;  
It's a place they call the Balkans,  
And I wish to leave to-morrow.

Our work is donkey driving,  
It is an awful task ;  
But I think I shall get through it—  
That is, if this job lasts.

Our lot is not all honey,  
With our mules we have a job ;  
But then, we must not grumble,  
Though at times they make us sob.

At grooming we get plenty  
Work—as it is called ;  
And if we get a great deal more,  
The mules, they will be bald.

Our corporal's rather windy,  
When the " heads " they are about ;  
" I say there, get on grooming ! "  
You can always hear him shout.

But when the war's all over,  
We all shall have our fling ;  
And to our dark-eyed corporal,  
We'll shout " God save the King."

DRIVERS, R.E. DETACHMENT.



"EACH DRIVER IS DOING HIS BIT."

### THINGS WE SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW :

Where is the sapper now that carried the late Major out of action ? and if the same sapper was really a sculpturer ?

The sweet names the drivers call their long-eared chums ; and if they are quite classical ?

If there is any truth of the orderly corporal getting drunk on the " Bachsheesh Quinine ? "

Why there is not the same merriment and rejoicing on quinine parade as on the rum parade ?

Who put the quinine in the water tank ? Likewise the man who tried to poison the troops by putting a quadruple dose of chloride of lime in the drinking water ?

If the boys' first experience of a gas attack in France was not decidedly amusing ?

When is it our turn for a rest behind the line ?

How is it the people at home think we are having such a good holiday out here in Macedonia ?

Who was the man that was fond of wiring when we first came up the line ?

Who was the man who pinched a tin of bully from the cookhouse on "iron ration" day. And what did the food controller have to say about it ?

When are we going to get an issue of soap that will lather ?

Are we as "barmy" as some people think we are ?

What kind of dog was it that stole the steaks one night when we were at La Valentine ?

What has become of Old Tickler and his jams ? Are they giving Anti-Malaria mixture in lieu of his mixture ?

Who was the Battalion Major who told the R.E. Corporal that he had a better eye than an R.E. spirit level ?

Who was the R.E. N.C.O. who passed the task as correct when the private had cut a foot off the measuring rod ?



## ROADS AND TRANSPORT IN THE BALKANS.

How many people at home realize that before the war but two main roads led through Macedonia from Salonika—one North-east to Seres, the other almost due west to Monastir—towns well over a hundred miles apart. And between, mountain mass and plain or marshy lakes, without a road—only rough cart tracks on the open soil, or still more rough and impassable donkey paths up the rugged hills and mountains. And one wonders if even the two roads above referred to could—until put in repair by the Allied Armies—be so called. Of “surface” there was none. One could hardly imagine that what was supposed to be a road could be so bad. The worst public road or lane-way at home is almost like a billiard table compared to them. It was quite a common sight to see a hole or trench, a couple of feet deep and two or three feet wide, extending over half-way across the main road. “Pot-holes” just as deep were numerous, and the general surface of the road was very uneven. In dry weather it was possible to avoid many of these holes, but in wet weather, when filled with slimy mud to the level of the surrounding road, they formed a trap for the unwary, and the first indication of their existence was on stepping knee deep into one, while wagons or motor lorries would sink axle deep. Large gangs of military and native labour were of course soon put on these two roads to repair them and keep them passable, and the Seres road, which leads for forty miles from Salonika, and is the only communication to the Struma front, has to have a large number constantly employed.

Elsewhere there existed only rough unmetalled tracks in the plains, or what were little better than goat paths up the hills. Across the plains going was easy in the dry weather, over the dry iron-hard soil, but in wet weather these tracks became soft quagmires. On the hills even the roughest cart tracks were non-existent, only rough tracks winding their uneven and tortuous course round spurs and ravines, up hill and down, hardly fit for even a mule. The amount of labour required to make communications in a mountainous country devoid of roads, and supply an army holding a long line across it, can better be imagined than described, and even before we moved up country and fighting began, the Salonika Army was not idle. Besides the two roads already referred to, there were, of course, the railways to Monastir and Doiran, but the Army on the Struma could only be supplied by the Seres road, over forty miles of hill and plain, and all lateral communications from this road and from the railway, and supplementary road communication along the latter, had to be made on virgin soil, and it may be imagined what road making in a mountainous country intersected and cut up by forbidding ravines means. New roads were made and light railways built, but the area occupied when the Army advanced was so large that only tracks could be made in many places, and it can readily be realised that the Salonika Army had soon to adopt pack transport. And so instead of motor lorries or horse wagons, stores had to be carried on pack mules, and strings of these animals accompanied each formation on the march.

As far as the natives are concerned their means of

locomotion are as primitive as the tracks which they use. As only rough tracks exist amongst the hills, the donkey and pack pony are commonly employed to carry both persons and goods. Heavy draught horses, as we are used to in England, are never seen—only ponies. It was a common sight to see a miserable wee donkey—the Macedonian donkey is not nearly so large as ours—plodding along with a corpulent owner astride him, his legs almost touching the ground. Many a time the onlooking British soldier expressed a desire to be able to make the man carry the donkey, and it would have been the more equitable load of the two. Donkeys are also used for carrying goods in sacks or panniers, laid across the wooden pack saddle. It is a common custom in those parts of the country, devoid of timber, for the natives to gather scrub to use for firewood in the winter, and this was transported from the hills to their homes on donkeys. Being bulky and light an apparently enormous load could be put on. It extended right out to the animal's head and almost touched the ground, so that except when quite close all one saw was a moving mass of bushes and perhaps the four feet underneath. Many of our horses that took no notice of motor lorries were quite frightened at the sight of these "moving bushes." As it passed one saw the wee animal's head peeping out between.

The apparently more well-to-do people had ponies instead of donkeys, and the Greek "Cavalry," of which we saw many during our first months near Salonika, were mounted on ponies, which ambled along in a half walk half trot. They rode with short stirrups and their legs almost along the animal's neck, and the sight of

them huddled up in the rough saddle, on a ragged ambling pony, after the French or British Cavalry, was humorous indeed, and seemed rather like a comic opera scene.

The common wheeled vehicle for transporting goods in Macedonia is the bullock cart. It is a long, narrow rough cart on four wheels, with a centre pole and cross wooden yoke for a pair of oxen. It has no sides, but long rough wooden poles let into holes along the floor at each side help to keep the contents in position. The animal's neck is placed in the wooden yoke, and a long wooden pin, running through the upper and lower timbers of the yoke, keeps it there. Of traces, head gear, collar or harness there is absolutely none. The animals draw the cart by the wooden yoke round their necks across the centre pole. It was a common sight to see these carts groaning and creaking, moving at a snail's pace. One profoundly pitied the poor animals. The bad holes in the road must have caused nasty jars to their necks, as they struggled to pull the wagon out, or drew it along the uneven road. Going down hill, there being no harness, the yoke slipped down to their horns, and the poor beasts kept backing and slipping along as the loaded wagon impelled them forward. The driver usually had a sharp goad with which he kept pricking the animals.

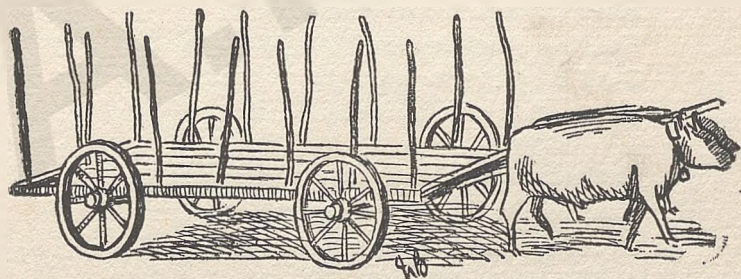
The Macedonian peasant is cruel to animals. He loads them excessively and works them even with raw sores, or when lame, and until they almost literally drop dead. When the troops first arrived in the country, they had to bury many carcases of donkeys left to die



by the side of the Seres Road, when they could go no further.

What a sight was presented to one on the Seres Road outside Salonika—a road streaming with traffic, from the primitive methods described above to the latest motor lorry. Here was the Balkan peasant trudging along on foot, or with pack donkey or pony, the bullock cart creaking slowly along, a “cab” drawn by ponies, conveying some civilians from the town, army wagons drawn by teams of horses or mules, the light motor ambulance or the heavy motor lorry lumbering and lurching along over the uneven road to the front. It was a “living picture” of methods of locomotion, from the earliest ages to the present day.

M. J. RATTRAY.



## THE ARMY PLATE.

A small party of "Tommies" was halted on the roadside to partake of some bully beef and biscuits. Whilst doing so a little Greek boy came running along and asked them for some "Bachsheesh." Thereupon one of the "Tommies" gave him some bully on a biscuit. At once he ran home with the gift and the "Tommies" resumed their meal. Half an hour elapsed and the boy returned, proceeding straight to the Tommy who gave him the food. Handing him back the biscuit he exclaimed, "Mother said the beef was very nice, thank you ! and here is your plate back."

L.CPL. A. BURRIDGE.

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"GROUSE."

Have I been in the army long, sir ?  
 Yes, two years or more,  
 But I'm waiting for my ticket  
 That's all I want, no more.

In the Balkans I've done my soldiering,  
 And I've done it against my will,  
 I've always been "swinging the lead,"  
 And I mean to do it, still.

We get a little canteen stuff,  
 But very little beer ;  
 But I mean to have a long, long drink  
 When I get home "some" year.

For "Blighty" I am longing,  
 The place I love so well :  
 But the chances are against us,  
 As the leave, it is "a sell."

But why should England tremble ?  
 Why should England fear ?  
 With Harry in the front rank.  
 And Billy in the rear.

NEWMAN AND NEWELL,  
*(The Balkan Twins.)*

#### GRATITUDE.

On August Bank Holiday last  
 This Company I did join ;  
 And since then I must confess  
 I've had a decent time.

We've been out on detachment,  
 A-working at our trades,  
 With Infantry and R.F.A.,  
 But ne'er missed all parades (Quinine).

We had a good dinner at 'Xmas,  
 The beer barrel we did tap,  
 In fact we had a jolly time,  
 Seeing that we're off the map.

SPR. W. J. GILES.

## BALKAN VILLAGES.

Standing on practically any high mountain in the Balkans, one sees villages dotted here and there, out on the plain and the opposite hills. This is one of the things which strikes the stranger in Macedonia fresh from the tiny hamlets, isolated cottages, and farm houses of Britain. There are no country houses in the Balkans—no farm houses, with their surrounding farms dotted here and there—for miles on the plain not a house is to be seen. The inhabitants have their plots of land, frequently at a considerable distance from the village, and go out to till it daily ; but instead of living on their land they congregate in villages. The only solitary house one sees is perhaps a wayside inn or a police post. Many of these villages, clinging to the bare hill slopes or surrounded by trees in the hollows amongst the foothills, or out in the plain, are exceedingly picturesque—from a distance. The red tiled roofs, and sometimes whitewashed walls, can be seen from a distance, and those which have trees around them are generally very picturesque indeed—especially if a slender white minaret rises over all—with their red roofs and white walls peeping through the trees. As one approaches the village, the typical Balkan verandahs on the houses can be seen. They give an additional picturesque air to the village, and at first give the impression that the side wall of the house is missing. Frequently storks' nests can be seen up on the trees, or the chimneys of the houses. In many villages, nestling amongst the trees at the foot of the hills, the blending

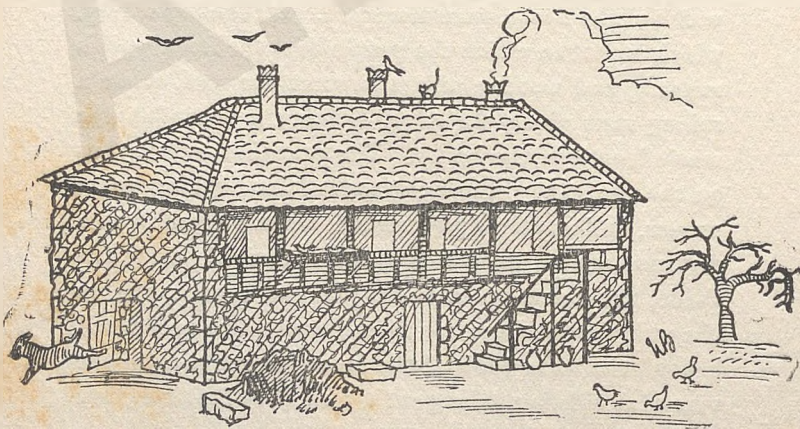


of the green trees, red roofs and white walls is often a pretty picture.

But, alas ! on entering even the prettiest of villages, as seen from the outside, one is sadly disillusioned. Filth and dirt abound. Of streets there are none. Narrow rough laneways lead round the houses. These are either not drained at all, or the drain, such as it is, is usually in the centre of the roadway, which is lower than the edges, and this drain, frequently full of stinking holes, conveys the village refuse along the centre of the road. Some of the better villages have cobbled laneways or paths.

The houses are usually built of rough hewn stone on the hills, and of mud bricks on the alluvial plains. They are almost invariably roofed with rough red tiles. The typical Balkan village house is of the simplest construction and design, and is usually dwelling-house, store house and cattle house in one. The houses have usually two stories. A longitudinal partition wall rises from the ground to the roof at about a third of the width of the house, from the front. On the top storey, which is that in which the people live, the front wall is missing, and wooden pillars support the roof, while a railing runs along the edge, forming a verandah the whole length of the house. The partition wall is thus on the top storey, the front wall of the dwelling-house proper, and as already remarked, when viewed from a distance, when this wall is either not visible or in the shade, the house has a rather singular appearance, as if a wall were missing, for the verandah does not extend beyond the main walls of the house, or the roof on the verandah side is not longer than on the other side, but

the balcony is part of the house. The back dwelling-house proper consists generally of merely two rooms—a kitchen and living room, and a bedroom with a cross partition wall of “wattle and daub”—hurdles plastered over with mud—between. In Turkish villages, one long house is usually divided by a main cross wall, into two semi-detached houses—one for the men and the other for the women. On the ground floor—which on hillside villages is usually dug in—the room under the dwelling-house proper is usually a store room for fodder, corn, etc., and the cattle stall is almost invariably under the verandah, stone steps leading from the yard or ground level outside the stall on to the balcony and dwelling-house. To have your cattle shed underneath your balcony cannot be very pleasant. Rubbish of all kinds lies about the yard, and numerous holes of mud and filth. The inhabitants seem to have no idea of sanitary living—as already illustrated by their public drains—or lack of them. If one enters a



deserted village, in the area just behind the line, rags and dirt of all kinds are to be found littered about the houses, and the visitor will very likely pick up a large number of fleas and bugs, even months after the inhabitants have left !

In the area of operations, either during the present war or the late Balkan wars, many villages exist rather on the map than on the ground, for they are now merely a heap of tumbled down mud walls in a wilderness of weeds, having either been sacked and razed to the ground in the Balkan wars, or sadly damaged by shell fire in the present war. It is sad to see villages so beautifully and picturesquely situated—either a heap of ruins if deserted, or so dirty on close examination if inhabited. With a peaceful and prosperous Macedonia there should be many pretty and happy villages on the countryside.

M. J. RATTRAY.

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#### REPLACED ON REPAYMENT.

When I spilt all my soup on my trousers,  
It left such a horrible stain,  
The Major said the marks would all vanish,  
If I left my pants out in the rain ;  
So the first rainy evening I left them  
On the hillside, on top of some plants,  
In the morning the stains had all vanished,  
By thunder ! and so had my pants.

N. B.



## STUNTITUS.

Besides making trenches and dug-outs,  
We were making roads by the score,  
And Hampshire Ridge, we won't forget,  
If we don't get there any more.

'Twas at Stonehenge one night in April,  
Where our boys got the word "fall in,"  
And away we went to Swindon,  
Expecting the fun to begin.

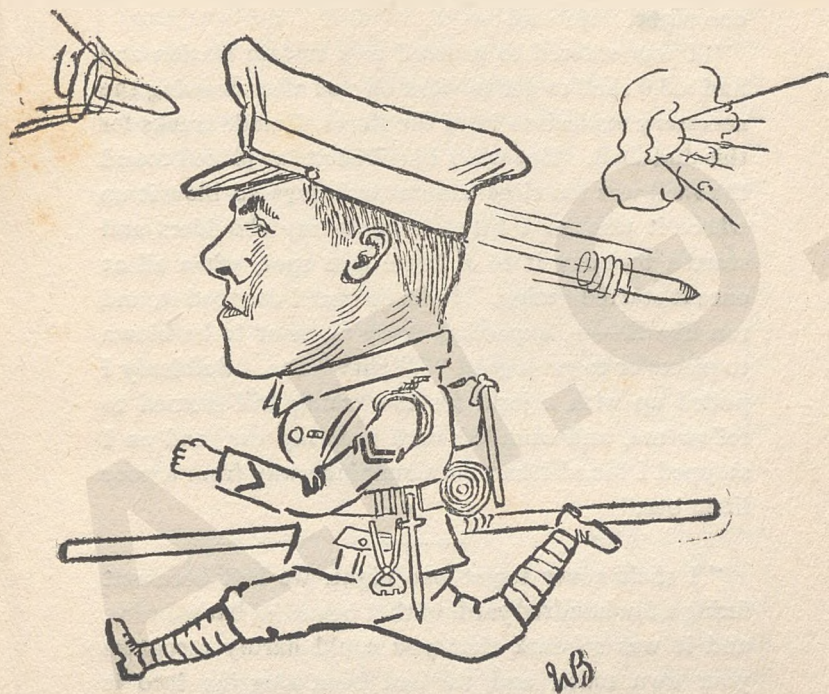
It was there we got the order,  
To pick up the *Bangalore*,  
And over the top, the lads did go  
As many had done before. ✓

Up to the enemy's wire we went  
The boys of the old R.E.'s,  
Putting more credit, as we thought,  
To the good old Company.

So, jolly good luck to our Company,  
Where new lads we see galore,  
And hope they will prove as good and true  
As the lads that have gone before.

CPL. H. GAWLER.





CORPL. GAWLER WINNING HIS M.M.

## FOUR SHORT STORIES.

Talking about the war reminds me of a little tale Sapper A—— who had been out blowing up dud shells fired by the enemy was telling us in the dug-out one night. He said :—

“ I was ordered to proceed to a certain station and find a 5.9 shell to get to work on ; so after drawing the necessary explosives from the stores, I made tracks for this dud shell. But when I arrived at the place I found the shell was too close to some buildings to blow it up where it was, so I lifted it on to my shoulders and started to carry it to a more open spot, when all at once it started fizzing. In an instant I dropped it, and ran like H——, expecting every moment to be blown to pieces or to get a good “ Blighty ” one. Suddenly I pulled up with a jerk, for the fizzing still seemed to follow me, and sounded very near my ear, and as I stopped I found I had been running away from a poor little bee.”

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“ I shall never forget one night, we had been out fixing a few hundred yards of that beautiful barbed wire, and it was so dark that you could hardly recognise your own mate, and we had been slogging into it rather hard when the order came ‘ fall in,’ ready to return to camp. Suddenly I missed my mate, and hunting around I found him sitting on a coil of wire—fast asleep—so giving him a sharp knock on his steel helmet with my pliers, I told him to put a ‘ move on,’ unless he wanted to be left behind as a target for ‘ Johnny ’ when daylight came. ‘ All right, Scot,’ he

replied, and to my astonishment I found it was my section officer waiting for us to 'fall in.'

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Another little incident that happened one of those very dark nights, was in connection with what the infantry call the "Sappers' Badge of Office," or in other words the 6 feet rod. But this time—not the poor sapper, but a full-blown corporal, who was clever enough to leave his rod lying on the parapet whilst taking a walk along the line to see if the working party were doing too much. Of course when he returned he was met with the usual cry "How's this, Corporal," and measuring with his 6 feet rod he was surprised to find they had dug six inches deeper than they were ordered. So he told them, having worked so well, they could "pack up" and return to camp. But the censor would not pass the things the Corporal said the next morning, and it was daylight, and he found the Infantry had only cut 1ft. off the 6ft. rod.

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Talking of the infantry's love for the sapper reminds me of a little incident that occurred in France. When a column of infantry were passing our camp, and Sapper P——, who was doing sentry go at the time, gave the usual challenge, "Halt, who goes there?" the officer in charge of the column—thinking all would be well—did not halt them, but shouted out to say it was a party of infantry moving to C——. Of course, the sapper, like a dutiful sentry, gave the challenge again, and brought his rifle with fixed bayonet into rather close quarters with the officer's breast, forcing him to halt the column, and then the officer told the sentry what



he thought of guards posted on main roads, etc. As an afterthought, he asked the sentry what unit he belonged to. The sentry very promptly replied "Royal Engineers, sir," but the officer, whose ire had been roused a little replied, "What a sloppy lot."

CPL. P. FORD.

### FORGETFULNESS.

When war is on, and danger's nigh,  
God, and our soldiers ! is the cry ;  
When war is over, and the enemy flighted,  
God is forgotten, and the soldier slighted.

This verse may not apply to all ;  
To some, I do my words recall ;  
But those who read and blush with shame,  
Perhaps will look through it again.

CPL. W. COUSINS.

### "THE FORAGE KING."

(*Joys of a Staff Job*).

Old Hocking is our "Forage King,"  
A fine upstanding chap ;  
And whether the mules are fat or thin  
He does not care a rap.

The "Wallahs" bring his forage up  
And dump it in the mud ;  
But Hocking doesn't fetch it down,  
For Hocking, he's no mug.



He sends us other drivers up  
To fetch his forage in ;  
While he sits in the forage shed  
And does a sly old grin.

I think he must be injured  
Somewhere about his back,  
For him you very seldom see  
Volunteer to fetch a sack.

He gets up in the morning  
And slips down to his shed,  
To make the morning's feeds out,  
Then scrambles back to bed.

If we happen to be on picquet,  
Old Hock' gives us the wheeze,  
" After you've done your first turn  
You might make out the feeds."

Then he lies in bed next morning,  
Till he knows the bacon 's done,  
Then out of bed old Hocking jumps,  
Like a shot out of a gun.

If your mules are working overtime,  
And you think they want " backsheesh,"  
When you go and ask old Hocking,  
You tremble at the knees.

If old Hocking thinks they've earned it,  
He'll give them an extra dip ;  
But if he thinks you're kidding him,  
You have to hop it—quick.

I can't think what he finds to do,  
 In that forage shed all day ;  
 For all I've ever seen him do  
 Is chop a bit of hay.

I don't know if he ever worked  
 Before he joined our mob ;  
 But if he did, I'll bet he thinks  
 He's clicked a soft old job.

When he gets back to Blighty,  
 I bet he dreads the day,  
 If he has to work for a living  
 He'll never earn his pay.

DR. ARTHURS.

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### FOOTBALL.

I think all will agree that the grand old game of Football (almost as old as "My 'igh 'at") has done more to relieve the monotony of life in the Balkans than anything else, and in this respect our Field Company has always "kept the ball rolling," thanks in many ways to the support given by the O.C. and other officers.

I have witnessed the Company team in a good many well fought contests, but I think that all who had the privilege and the pleasure of being present at the Snevece League Match, between the S.A.S.A.C. and ourselves, on the 30th January, 1918, will agree with me that this game will stand on record as one of the finest games ever played in the Balkans.

Our opponents were undefeated and held the proud position of top of the league at the time, whilst we were lying 3rd on the table, having won four games off the reel and scoring 20 goals, with only one against them. All who knew the teams were aware that it would be a very close contest, and those who managed to get there to see it were by no means disappointed. It was touch and go from the kick-off to the final siren from the Ref's whistle, and the result—a draw of one goal each—was about the most fitting result possible. Both goals were obtained in the first half, and, perhaps, it was rather a “soft” goal that gave the S.A.S.A.C. the lead for a short period, but their “goalie” was well beaten a few minutes afterwards by a short punt by the swift Turner (he certainly *turned* the tide).

Of the players as a whole, I think the R.E. goal-keeper was the “shining light”—some of his saves were really marvellous, and the surrounding hills echoed with “Good old J. C.!” Mention must also be made of the referee who “held the game” in great style, and his decisions were always in accordance with the majority.

Yes, I think this was the finest game played by any team representing the Company.

SERGT. F. BOLDEN.

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While at Herlville village, acquiring  
 Experience in digging and wiring ;  
     The Bosches sent shells,  
     And history tells  
 That the boys were not bad at retiring.

## MORE THINGS WE SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

Did the Quarter-master lose a bundle of stripes the other day ?

What the Major said when the Corporal told him that a mule had fallen down thro' exhaustion ?

Why did a certain driver put his G.C. Badge up before it was posted up in orders ?

Why did the sapper say "dripping" when he handed in his P.H. helmets for redipping ?

Why did Dr. Atkinson have such a broad smile on his face when somebody shouted "Beer up?"

What did Corporal Forman mean by saying to some drivers "Take your circingles off, unhitch, and dismount?"

Why did the Sergt. Major go home on leave with bandolier, spurs, and hunting crop ?

What did the driver say when the rat jumped on the Farrier Sergt.'s bald head ?

Why did a certain corporal have sergeant's stripes in his kit bag, and lose them when promotion was read out ?

Why Dizzy looked so wild when the Major said "cancel the 'Anti-Aircraft' mixture to-day" ?

Why Dr. Phippen turned so white when the corporal told him that he had to take a pair of mules ?

What did Cpl. Bardswell mean by saying to a driver, "I see you have been bad all day, Joe! Have you got any spare bread and a 'Bachsheesh' tin of jam?"

Why did Sergt. Keenan tell a certain driver that he would be a father to him ?

What did Fatty Smith do in the Great War ?



What the Anthem is that the drivers play on the band ?

Who was the sapper of No. 1 Section who said shell-ing was a silly game ?—" You fire at them and they only shoot back at you."

Who was the sapper who showed that the Company could spit ?

Who Sapper Clarkson considered a silly ass ?

What kind of fruit the Battle of Doiran most repre-sented ?

What did the mess cat die of ?

Whether the C.S.M. found out what happened to " Peggy the Second ?" And what Driver Veasier thought about it ?

Whose firewood Cpl. Downing sent home on a pack mule ?

Who judged the pack mule class at the Horse Show ?

What happened to the Bulgar prisoner's watch ?

Who invented Q 9 ?

Did C.S.M. Strachan's watch go on wheels ?

Has the correct method of laying corrugated iron been settled yet ?

One of the very amusing incidents which occurred whilst the Company was in France. Scene :—Interior of a cafe at Villers X——

Sapper S.—Parlez vous Francais, Madame ?

Madam.—Oui, Oui, Monsieur, certainement.

Sapper S.—Well, give us a pint of beer.

## THE PEOPLE OF MACEDONIA.

Macedonia is inhabited by nationals of all the surrounding Balkan States—giving them all an excuse to claim it as their own, and to wage war to liberate their brethren “groaning under the foreign yoke.” Even under Turkish rule it was inhabited by many Greeks, Bulgars and Serbs, and is still. The nationals of each state usually congregate in villages by themselves, and so, in the one district, it is not uncommon to see a few villages, only a few miles apart, one Bulgar, another Turkish, and so on. Of course certain large tracts of country are inhabited almost entirely by people of one nationality, but where they do mingle they separate themselves into communities as above. For instance, in the district round the Seres Road, outside Salonika, Ajvatli, a mile west of that road, was reputed to Bulgars, Lajna, a mile east was Greek—and the Greek churches bear witness to a Christian community; while out in the plains, a few miles away, the white minarets of Langaza testified that the inhabitants were followers of Islam; and here one saw the Turk with his red fez and baggy trousers, with the “seat” on a level with his knees. Similarly throughout the country. In the front line area, from the Vardar to the Struma, one came across Bulgar and Turkish villages only a few miles apart.

Our acquaintance with the people of Macedonia was mostly confined to the base area around Salonika during our first months there. When we went into the line, we of course entered an area deserted by civilians, and

many of us saw neither a civilian man, woman, or child for over a year, as we never got out of the line once we were in. However, the district round Salonika and up country is typical of the whole, for those natives whom we saw behind the line when moving from one part of it to another, were no different in dress or habits, and the deserted villages were just the same.

The Turk wears the peculiar baggy trousers above referred to. The women, of course, are veiled, though not always, and "harem skirts" are sometimes seen. The dress of the ordinary peasant is almost universally the same. The men's trousers—usually made of very rough brown homespun material—are very baggy at the knees, and they fit rather tightly on the legs right down to the ankles. They do not wear coats as we know them, but a kind of waistcoat with sleeves. This is frequently ornamented with braid of various colours. Practically all, Moslems and Christians alike, wear fold after fold of blanket-like material, wound about their waists. Most of the peasants wear rough leather moccassins, tied with thongs, though some have clogs, others merely a wooden sandal with a strap of leather across the instep. The poorest have not even leather moccassins, but some of canvas, tied round the foot with bits of string.

In winter most of the men wear a cloak-like overcoat of brown homespun material, like freize, with a cowl at the back. Though sleeves are nearly always provided it is rarely the owner makes use of them, usually wearing it like a cloak across his shoulders and pinned or buttoned at the breast.

The women are exceedingly fond of colour, and on

Sundays especially, wear multi-coloured aprons and stockings. The more sober-coloured week-day dress gave place to aprons, dresses, and even stockings of all sorts of colours. The colours are usually in bands, and the cloth is usually woven by the villagers themselves, who could be seen at their spinning wheels and hand looms. In the deserted villages about the front line, pieces of spinning wheels or looms could frequently be picked up in the houses.

Many scenes in Macedonia recall Bible scenes or stories. Here can be seen the women coming with their earthenware pitchers to the well, just as in ancient times. The village fountain is a common meeting place for the women of the village, and here a chattering throng of them can be seen, literally at least, if not metaphorically, "washing their dirty linen in public." Here on the hills is seen the shepherd leading his flocks of sheep and goats, with the shepherd's long crook in his hand, and the bells on the necks of some of the sheep or goats tinkling as they move along. Ploughing is done with oxen and a primitive wooden plough, as in the time of Christ, while the sight of a native astride a donkey reminds one of His entry into Jerusalem, "sitting upon an ass," or of Baalam in the narrow passage on his ass. The corn is cut with sickles, and the "threshing" of the corn brings one right back to the time of Moses, who enjoined his followers not to "muzzle the ox that trod the corn." Here the method of 3,000 years ago is before one's eyes—as the native has'nt "risen" to even a flail. I saw such a scene. The corn was spread on the dry hard ground, and the ox, drawing a flat bottomed "sleigh" in which sat a



couple of natives, walked round in circles. When this had been done sufficiently, he was drawn to one side and the straw was tossed with forks, a gentle breeze blowing much of the chaff away. The straw was gathered and the corn swept up with brooms, "winnowed" in a sieve, and the clean corn finally put in bags. Such was the operation of threshing. Grinding, too, is of the most primitive description—merely two round flat stones, the upper of which is revolved on the lower one. Frequently the whole aspect of the country and the customs of the people remind one irresistibly of Bible times.

M. J. RATTRAY.



## BANDY'S PRISONER.

" Hello ! here we are again,  
 Out in Macedonia among the hills and rain ,  
 Where the boys still remain  
 Till they drive Johnny to Sofia again.

It was one day in April  
 When the stars began to shine,  
 A Bulgar into our camp did jump  
 And wandered into my R.E.  
 dump.

Said to him " Come on, Johnny,  
 Away from ' Petit Couronne,' "  
 Again I said " Bring out your  
 money,  
 Then I'll feed you on bread and  
 honey."



BANDY'S PRISONER  
 96b

The time will come when all is done,  
 Then back to " Blighty " we shall come,  
 And when across the sea we're gone,  
 We'll awake to a golden dawn.

Then all our friends will meet us,  
 They will all be there to greet us,  
 Then Bandy will cuss at missing the bus,  
 So jolly good luck to all of us.

(Written and composed by Sapper REEVE, better known  
 as " Bandy."

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## THE COMITADJI AND THE BASHIBAJUK.

The Comitadji, having wandered farther than usual into the wilds of the Macedonian hills, encountered by chance the "Hostelry of the Three Ruby Bottles," the headquarters of the "Sloe Whisky Distillery Section" of the Royal Engineers--secret, but well known to the initiated.

Here, finding himself at his ease under such pleasant conditions, over a third glass of the Caledo--Macedonia spirit--learnt the startling news that not only had a real live Bashibajuk been captured, but also, that he had escaped.

Under the influence of the fourth glass of the potent liquid, the Comitadji loaded his blunderbus with a double charge of hot air and a plentiful supply of new gold fountain-pen nibs, and set off over the hills with the inspiring war cry of his ancient race, to trail the quarry to his lair.

At the top of the hill, having reconnoitred the country, he took a swill at his water-bottle, which he had thoughtfully filled with the justly famed ruby.

Thus did inspiration come to him.

He spied, immediately, on a neighbouring hill top, silhouetted by the setting sun, a suspicious figure, moving with stealth, sinister in the extreme.

"Ha! Ha!" muttered the Comitadji. "It must be he."

"The Bashibajuk, in earnest, seeking his prey, but I will track the tracker."

With utmost care, creeping up against the wind, over the hill shoulder, he tracked his quarry, until at a

favourable moment, with careful aim and bated breath, he realised doom and destruction around him. Nothing can describe the cries of anguish, the curses and prayers to the Almighty, which followed this awful onslaught.

But lo!—being propelled forcibly from behind, the B.B. set off at breakneck speed down the hill.

After recovering his breath, the B.B. at last reached a point of vantage. Nothing could be seen but deep ravines and almost impenetrable scrub oak—no Bashibajuk.

“This is damned curious, where can he be?” said the Com.

After a careful search through his signaller’s telescope, he sees an object that rouses his interest to such a pitch that all the B.B.’s there ever were are forgotten.

Surely a new species of Macedonian fauna in the bush, a hundred feet below. It moves!—it must be the new kind of hedgehog, soliloquises the Com.

He approaches—not so!

A mistake arising naturally from the use of the telescope the wrong way round. “It must be a pair of legs—a seat with—Yes!—gold nibs—Yes!—It is the B.B.” “Surrender,” shouts the Com., in a voice of thunder.

Out from under a mass of prickles emerges a form, bedraggled, but piqued.

“Who the devil are you,” it shouts.

“I can do all the shouting—who might you be,” says the Com.—“for the like of you I never saw before—you are no B.B.” Where are your moustaches waving in the breeze? Where is your scimitar? But yet I see you have a sword—render it to me.”



" You be damned. Do you know who I am ? "

" We shall doubtless find out that in our torture chamber."

" I am General ————"

" The meeting is opportune. Your fame has travelled throughout the land as a person of good taste in strong liquors. As one expert to another, what do you think of this ? "

Suddenly releasing the cork he emptied the remaining contents of the water bottle down the General's throat.

Further narration is almost needless. After a few seconds a friendship of a lifetime had been formed, and shortly after two figures lay stretched out fast asleep, a prey to tortoises and other noxious animals.

W. H. BROWN.

It is rumoured that—

The C.Q.M.S. has drawn some bath chairs from Ordnance, for the use of the Company—next summer.

Company saddlers will be busy soon making sandals, prior to the Company going to Egypt.

Marbles and tops will be issued to our footballers in the summer.

A hundred and ten per cent. of the Company will go on leave, the year after next, to England.

On next " May Day " the drivers will decorate their animals with orchids and twenty-five drachme notes.



" WHY AREN'T YOU IN THE ARMY ?"  
" YUS, AND WHY AREN'T YOU IN THE ZOO ?"

## MY THREE DAYS' LEAVE AT SALONIQUE.

DEAR GUSSIE.

I know a lot of people at home think that the Salonica army are having a holiday out here, but I can assure you that the majority are not. I admit there are a few who are. They are commonly known as "Base Wallahs," but Gussie, I would not like anybody to think that I was one of them. Oh, no ; I am pleased to say that I am a front line soldier, and have been for over two years. Oh, yes ; we have a front line here ; I will tell you and then, perhaps, you can ease some poor duffer's mind who thinks we are all in Salonica. Well, Gussie, what I was going to tell you was that I have had a holiday, and that was about a week before 'Xmas. Yes, my friend and I went to Salonica for my three days' leave, and a ripping time we had, too. Well, before we started we had a lot of fellows coming to us, asking us to buy them souvenirs, and one thing and another "I say, Bert," said one, "will you buy me a watch when you go to Salonica?" Following him was another fellow who wanted his watch mended—another wanted me to buy him a silk handkerchief—another some cards, and so on. After I had got a book full of orders, I began wondering how I was going to carry them back : but I decided to do my best for them. We got our passes that night, and were told to report to the A.P.M. when we arrived at our destination. We arose early next morning, about 4-30, to be in time to catch the train. It was a nice morning and it was raining beautifully, and we started off through about a foot of slush—with two hours' walk in front of



us. Eventually we arrived at the station about ten minutes before the scheduled time for the departure of the train. We waited about twenty minutes, and on the train not arriving, let alone departing, we inquired how long it would be. We were informed that the train had run off the metals, and the next one would be about two hours—adding that we were lucky as the train had run off just inside the double lines. The next train would be able to pass it alright, but they doubted if it would catch the connection at “X” station. They said it might, if the train was quick—and that was what they called being lucky, Gussie, I’m blessed if I thought we were.

Well, the next train arrived alright, without running off the metals, the carriages were very smart—just a flat platform affair, with a few iron bars stuck up round it. We sat down in one of these and off we went, getting smothered in black smoke from the engine, but we did not mind that. We passed the other train on the way down, men were trying to lift it on the rails with jacks and crowbars. I don’t know what nationality the men were, but they were saying something about the engine I could not understand. Our’s was a good little engine, but it had to stop about every thousand yards to draw water ; and once the driver stopped at a little village to get his washing—which he had given to a Greek woman to do. At last we arrived at X station, just in time to miss the connection to Y station, and the second one ran about midnight. Then my friend began to grumble a bit, and said some nasty things about engines and the men who made them, but I consoled him by reminding him of what a good time we would



have when we arrived at Salonica. After spending the rest of the day at X station, drinking tea and eating cakes, we felt a bit better, and met the midnight train with a smiling face.

We arrived at Y station safe and sound early in the morning and proceeded from there to Salonica in a motor lorry. Piccadilly Circus they called the place where we alighted, Gussie, but it was not a bit like the Piccadilly Circus at home. Salonica is a beautiful place—it might have been once—perhaps two or three hundred years ago. The first thing we had to do was to find the A.P.M., so we enquired from a military policeman—standing at the corner—of that gentleman's whereabouts. After going in the direction he had indicated for about half an hour, we enquired again, and were directed in a different direction altogether. When we found it, they took our names and numbers and how old my grandmother was, and all that tommy rot, and gave us a pass to a camp where we could get something to eat, and where we had to stay at night ; having strict orders to be in by nine o'clock at the latest.

We found the camp and reported to the orderly room, from there we were sent to the quarter-master, who gave us a little bit of dry bread and told us to go into the dining-room. On entering we were given a slice of bully beef and some weak tea, so we decided—although it was our first meal in the camp—it would be the last.

We made our way out of the camp and the first thing we saw outside the gates were a lot of little boot-blacks with box and brushes. "Come on, Johnny," they

were saying, "good sine." "That's the stuff to give 'em," so we decided on having our mud-bespatted boots cleaned. When they had finished we gave them half a franc, which we thought would be plenty. "Eh! Johnny!" he said, "your boots verra dirty, me plenty of work;" so I gave him another twopence. That was our first dealing with the Greeks, but later we found that his fellow citizens were just as bad. For on entering a barber's shop to get a shave, wash and brush up, he charged us two francs apiece; of course we paid it without a murmur, like a true Britisher.

After roaming about the town for a while, we went into a place to get something to eat—"Miss Parkers," was the name of the place—and thought we would be alright. We were handed a flash menu, and glancing down it my eyes rested on "Pork and Greens." I asked my friend if he would like some, and he answered in the affirmative. I ordered for two, but when the waiter brought it I nearly swooned; there was as much pork as you could put in your eye, and about as much greens. So we ordered another two, there and then. After that I had another look down the menu, and saw eggs. I knew that he could not swindle us with them very well, so I ordered two each, with bread and tea. The eggs were alright, but the bread was that horrible brown stuff. Then we had some more eggs, bread and tea—and some more after that, until we thought we had had enough. Then we asked for the bill—Oh, my eyes!!! Pork and greens, two francs, one helping, which altogether amounted to eight francs; two fried eggs, one-and-a-half francs; small piece of bread twopence, and a small cup of tea fourpence. I

think the total came to about twenty francs something, so I put a twenty-five franc note down and went out quick.

Then we made our way to a watchmaker's shop ; I showed him the one I wanted mending and asked him how much it would be. He took it to pieces and had a look at it, and said it wanted cleaning—the same as an English watchmaker says, whether it does or not—a new spring and goodness knows what. “ Well, how much, Johnny,” I asked. “ Twelve francs, Johnny,” he replied. “ This watch very much broke.” I decided to leave it, anyway, and asked him to show me some of his watches. “ This one verra goot,” he said, “ 8 day—verra goot watch—best watch in Salonique—only 30 francs.” It was not a bad watch, and I asked him for two like it.

We were walking along the street when we encountered a man selling silks. I spotted a nice wrap, so I pulled it down and had a look at it. Being satisfied with it I asked of him how much it would be—thinking to myself—about 7 or 8 francs. “ Seventeen francs, Johnny, verra goot, all silk,” he said. I told him it ought to be made of gold thread for that money, and walked away. Later, we came to a man selling tangerines, “ verra goot tangerines,” he was saying, “ verra goot—verra nice—verra sweet—verra clean, one penny each.” I thought I would like some, so gave him a franc, and went to pick up ten, that were on show. “ Them no a penny, Johnny,” he said, “ 2 for 3d.”—these ones a penny,” pointing to some small dirty looking things, at the back of the shop. I would not give

him any more money, so I took six of those I was picking up and left him.

After we had tea and visited one or two cafés, we made our way to camp. We lost our way once or twice, but eventually found it, and arrived at the camp a bit late, telling the policeman at the gate that it was our first day in Salonica and had lost our way. He told us to go and draw our blankets and be earlier the next time. Having procured two blankets—but not before we had signed for them—we went to the tents where we were supposed to sleep, but found them all full, so spent the night on the tables in the dining-room. At 5-30 a.m. we were rudely awakened by the cooks, who told us that breakfast was at 6 o'clock, and they wanted the place cleared up before then.

Well, after visiting a picture palace and having our photos taken—I might mention that they charged us seven francs for half-a-dozen—and getting the watch I had mended, and one or two other things, we decided to go back to our unit that night, instead of the next day and try and forget about Salonica. "What is the time," asked my friend when we were in the train. I pulled out the watch that I had bought for myself, and to my horror, the thing was stopped. I could not get it to go anyhow, so I threw it out of the window in disgust. After that I counted up my money and found that I had just 10 francs left out of 200. No more Salonica leave for me—oh, no; Salonica is a terrible place,

Yours truly,

(Bert) SPR. TELLING, A.



## A PAIR OF BLIGHTERS.

I have a pair of donkeys,  
Their names are Tom and Bob,  
To get them from the R.E. lines,  
It is a terrible job.

I call them all the wicked names  
That ever you did know,  
But neither whip nor cursing  
Would make the rotters go.

If they see a G.S. wagon,  
It fills them both with fright,  
The only way to get them out  
Is to take them out at night.

They are two lazy bounders,  
They always "swing the lead,"  
I've wished times without number  
That both the brutes were dead.

I wish some folks in Blighty,  
Who think I've a soft job,  
Would come out here and have a go  
At driving Tom and Bob.

If I sold these mules in Blighty,  
They'd make a pound a leg,  
But rather than I'd buy them  
I'd beg my daily bread.

The mud out here is awful,  
To clean them is a job,  
I think that's all I have to say  
Of poor old Tom and Bob.

DRIVER SUMMERS.

## WATER IN MACEDONIA.

Fortunately, and what a boon in such a climate, water is on the whole plentiful in Macedonia. Certainly while a large army was concentrated about the town of Salonika, during our early months in the country, the supply for such a large force in such a small area was an anxious problem, and much well-sinking and much pipe-laying had to be done ; but when we spread up country, numerous springs or native fountains provided ample supplies. The Turk, who had no ideas on sanitation, was most attentive to water supply. Every little village had its fountain or fountains, either in the village itself or close by. The most obscure little village had its supply, often brought from a considerable distance in a stone and mortar channel or earthenware pipe. Sometimes these extended for a mile or more, sometimes only a few hundred yards, to the source of supply. The fountains are almost invariably of one type—a solidly built stone wall with a recessed arch, through which is built a metal pipe, usually cemented into the stone pipe or drain a few yards behind the fountain. A small rectangular recess in the recessed arch is also usually provided for a drinking vessel, and frequently an inscription in the local language of the village—Turkish or Greek, etc.—is cut on the large stone in the wall.

These fountains are erected even out in the plains, miles from the nearest village, to provide water for the oxen and people ploughing and working out there, and sometimes an aqueduct a couple of miles long may lead to a fountain out in the plain.

Once having got the water to where he wanted it, the Turk, with his usual complete lack of cleanliness and sanitation, did not mind where it went to, and simply left it to flow where it willed. Consequently in flat ground the approach to the fountain was frequently a quagmire in which animals sank to their knees, and much R.E. work was frequently done in drying and draining the surroundings of the fountains and taking the overflow away in proper drains.

As already mentioned, springs are comparatively numerous, and many of these were converted into excellent little water supplies for various bodies of troops. In the hot weather, when all water near a camp is precious, even a tiny supply is taken in hand ; but I have seen many excellent springs—in one case, coming across one which gave a supply of 3,000 gallons per hour in June—sufficient to supply a town. The spring water is usually cool, and what a relief it was when parched and dripping with perspiration, to come across a spring and have a copious draught, and bathe face and hands in the cold water. Walking round the works and line in the summer time, the “halts” were usually where a spring was. I remember one spring which gave the coldest water I ever drank—in summer time—in Macedonia. Issuing from a small fountain in a shady nook, it was icy cold even in the broiling hot weather ; and on drinking a cup of it “straight off” one got that “catch” in the throat that only the coldest water can give. Such a supply of water, in such a climate, is a boon which cannot be over-estimated.

M. J. RATTRAY.

The subject of water in this country is not a great one, as it can be found in large quantities in almost every ravine. One finds that most of the old Turkish fountain supplies start on the rocky slopes of a ravine, sometimes the fountain being built very close to the source, while other supplies are conveyed long distances in earthenware pipes to the places required. Mostly all fountains are built of stone with a stone lip in front, out of which the water flows.

Most of the villages will be found hidden away behind spurs, which shelter them from the north and east winds. The villages are mostly found on the low slopes of the hills, and the water supplies are conveyed from or situated in the ravine above. Iron is found in large quantities, in some of the supplies, where the pipes or troughs under the fountain are covered with thick rust.

All spring water will be found to be the coolest in summer and the warmest in winter, presumably because it keeps at one temperature throughout. In some places small wells are abundant, they are really small springs, the supply of which if not stored in small dip wells would be of no use.

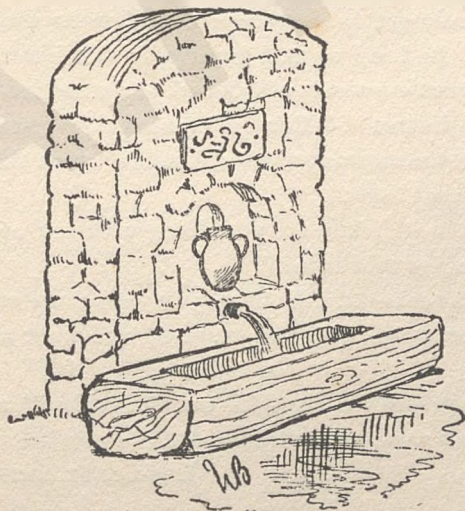
Some of the before-mentioned fountains must have been in use for a large number of years as the pipe lines have become choked with weeds and roots, and the supply has been diverted, causing it to waste away down the ravine. Mica will be found in some of the springs, in the form of sparkling sand in the water. Springs are also found high up in the hills. Some of the fountain supplies are conveyed in stone channels, in which they pick up the water nearly the whole way along. Hot water springs are to be found ; also soda



water springs, but they are very uncommon. The water from some of the springs will be found to be covered with a film of oil. By tracing the tracks it will be found that fountains or wells were built wherever a spring was found. They formed drinking places for the old time travellers to quench their thirst.

The country being very hilly often becomes dry. One never runs across a Beet or Whisky spring, sometimes a rum spring will be found in the Quartermaster's stores, but not very often. Beer springs seem much the same. So it will be seen that Macedonia is a well-watered country, and not very likely to experience a drought.

II CPL. DRUMMER W.,  
Water Expert.



## THE BITER BIT.

'Twas a very cold night and the lads had turned into "kip" earlier than usual, and were quietly listening to a tale being told by one of the lads concerning himself and his temporary wife during his three days' leave in Salonique, when the whistle was blown for "lights out." Everybody said "good-night" and went to sleep, well satisfied with how the tale had ended. Later on, about 3 a.m., one of the old Sutton Veny "sweats" was awakened by a stealthy movement from the bed on the right of him—wherein slept a recruit fresh from "Blighty." Thinking himself very smart, he quietly removed the overcoat from the "old sweat's" bed; but the "old sweat" said nothing, but thought of the old saying "He that laughs last, laughs best," and let the recruit get to sleep again. When he thought he was in the land of nod he simply did likewise, and pulled both overcoats off his bed, and snuggled up himself and dreamt of "Burgoo." for breakfast next morning. In the morning the "old sweat" gave the recruit his overcoat back.

Recruit—"What are you doing with my overcoat? I woke up as cold as ice."

Old Sweat—"Next time you wake up cold, ask, and then I will give you my bed and walk about all night."

(Result)—Sergeant yells out "Stables!" and Cpl. Desforges was a patient deficient.

LCE-CORPL. SMITH, E.

## COMING OUT—AND OUT.

From the Straits of Gib. to Lemos,  
 See the British Army go,  
 Through Salonika to Serbia,  
 There to meet the German foe.

Bags of bully beef and biscuits,  
 We'll not feel starvation's pinch,  
 When we get ashore the mainland  
 We will make the beggars flinch.

When we get across the frontier,  
 We will march into Berlin,  
 And we will not rest contented  
 Till we've done the blighters in.

While waiting for six months outside Salonique—  
 "fed up," and far from home.

We are the rag-time Army,  
 No b—— good are we,  
 We cannot fight, we cannot shoot,  
 In fact we cannot see.

But we didn't doubt that the "waiting" period  
 would soon come to an end, and more strenuous days  
 were in store—as they were—for the song continued :

But when we get to Berlin,  
 The Kaiser he will say,  
 Hock ! Hock ! Mein Gott ! what a very fine lot  
 Are the boys of the old R.E. !

M.J.R.

## RUMOURS.

Wally No. 1 to Jack No. 2 : " Have you heard the latest ? "

Jack : " No, I have 'nt, old man. Is it anything good ? "

Wally : " Rather. It is simply marvellous—almost past believing—but there it is. Talk about being clever, why it beats the band."

Jack : " Now Wally, old man, if it's as good as all that spit it out and don't keep a man waiting."

Wally : " Well here it is. They have been experimenting on some camels, and have found out the secret of how a camel stores its water in its hump, and now they are going to fit up all the mules here with the hump. How's that for high, Jack, old sport ? "

Jack : " High, eh ; rather tall. Why, man the thing's impossible."

Wally : " Oh, no, it isn't : many things are done in the army. Why ! I know some men who have been fitted with the hump."

Wally leaves the seat of rumours, quietly chuckling.

Next day a driver meets Wally and informs him of the latest rumour in humps, and says he knows on good authority that it is quite correct, and that a special corps of Vets. has arrived in Macedonia to start operations.

Wally grins and says to the driver—" By jove, that will mean a lot to you drivers, just watering your animals once a week. But how will the officers like to see mules with the hump ? "

Driver : " I don't know and don't care. They will



have to be like us and put up with it. Damn! There goes old Bugg's whistle—it's time to water again. I'll have to buzz off."

Wally: "Cheer up, old man, don't get the hump."

And so another great rumour was started in a land of rumours. It went around, and by and by it got to the officers' quarters, but they—like wise Generals—traced it to its true source and declined to believe it. And so another fact went "west," like many others before it.

II. CPL. W. PRICE.

### THE CLIMATE OF MACEDONIA.

The Macedonian climate is one of extremes—intense cold in winter and early spring, and almost tropical heat during the long summer. The spring and autumn are of short duration, and the change from heat to cold and vice versa is rapid.

In the winter snow blizzards are frequent, and on the higher hills and mountains the snow remains for months. Throughout the district north of Salonika, towards Doiran, the dreaded "Vardar wind" is prevalent—an icy blast which comes down the Vardar valley from the snow-clad mountains to the north and chills to the very bone. At times it reaches the intensity of a hurricane, so that one can hardly walk against it, and on a frosty night the cold is highly intensified by this penetrating blast, which seems to go right through clothes and cut into the bone.

On the higher mountain masses like the Krusa Balkan, one spends a good part of the winter between clear frosty days or snow blizzards, amongst or above

the clouds, which roll in thick mists up the ravines and over the mountain tops.

The worst periods for snow may vary. During our first winter snow fell heavily in November and December, and there was little or none during the winter after that. In our second winter, there was little snow before 'Xmas, the worst falls being in February. There were also falls of snow in March, but the latter were not of long duration.

During winter a fine sunny day is really fine, but the night is intensely cold, and the change is very marked. This has been our experience during our two years in Macedonia—during the months of January or early February, usually. The days, while the sun was up, were quite warm, but immediately the sun disappeared below the horizon it became intensely cold. If the "Vardar wind" was blowing, however, even the genial rays of the sun failed to alleviate its biting blast, and at night it greatly increased the cold. During our first winter we slept in tents. It was a common occurrence to have one's washing water frozen hard in the bucket inside the tent, or the milk frozen in the jug inside the mess tent. During that winter, sleeping with underclothes on, a woollen cardigan jacket, woollen mufflers and three pairs of socks, in a woollen sleeping bag, with three pairs of blankets and clothes and overcoats on top, it was by no means too warm! And the joy of breaking the ice, to wash in the icy cold morning, especially if a breeze was blowing, can be imagined. One's fingers and hands were numb almost before the water reached the face. This, of course, was when we had landed. Now that we have winter quarters, and dig

cosy dug-outs deep into Mother Earth, covered with "tin," the cold is largely diminished; and if a charcoal brazier or little fire is burning in the dug-out, it can be made as warm as a house, and quite snug and cosy. When the sun rose, the day became quite warm, and this bright clear weather was healthy and crisp.

This intense cold ends on the whole in February or March, which are usually the most rainy months of spring. As already mentioned, snow showers may come between the rain. Having been told that February was the "rainy season," one expected a month of continuous rains, and was agreeably surprised. We then expected a month of rain in March, with the same result. When the rain came it poured in torrents, and in half an hour a dry sandy stream bed in a rocky ravine would become a raging torrent, but this intense rain was seldom of long duration. Intense torrents of rain rarely last more than a few hours, and "ordinary rain" a couple of days. Owing to the hilly nature of the country, the torrents and signs of rain quickly disappeared, and the ground quickly dried up, and perhaps a fortnight of nice weather would intervene before the next heavy fall of rain. Doubtless the fall in "inches" was much greater for this short period than for a much longer period at home, but there was a welcome absence of that continual drizzle for days on end, which is a feature of our British climate. The above applies to the plains and low-lying hills. On the high mountain masses like the Krusa Balkan, as already mentioned, the sunny period between the rains is largely decreased by the mists and clouds which roll over the mountain tops for days, and though not

actual rain, obscure the view and sun, and are exceedingly damp. During several of those thick fogs on the mountains it was impossible to see more than twenty yards.

April and May are undoubtedly the best months of the year. Though "April showers" are often common in Macedonia, too, the rainy season is usually over. Already the weather is getting warm, and mid-April approximates to mid-summer in England. May, too, is such a beautiful month, though towards the end of May one is usually approaching the hot weather, which sometimes, however, holds off till June. This is undoubtedly the time to travel for pleasure in the country and to see it at its best. The blizzards and the cold of the winter, with its accompanying bad travelling conditions over the primitive tracks, are no more. The rainy season is to all intents and purposes ended, and the sweltering heat of summer, when any physical exertion is a discomfort, has not arrived. The climate is still healthy. The mosquito makes its appearance with the hot weather, and one travels in a climate like an English midsummer, or better. The country is looking its best, the grass is green, the trees—in the districts where there are any—are in leaf, and the numerous wild flowers in full bloom. Every shrub is a pleasant green, and in many places the country is really beautiful with its green and coloured carpet and picturesque villages at the foot of the hills, often surrounded by trees in full leaf, and much of the mountain scenery is beautiful. The air is still clear and beautiful views can be obtained.

The month of June usually sees the arrival of the



hot weather, with its attendant myriads of flies, mosquitoes and other insects, and sweltering almost unbearable heat, and until the end of August or middle of September—with occasional very short reliefs, due to thunderstorms, etc.—one has to endure a semi-tropical heat. I have heard Mesopotamia described as “a place where it is 120° in the shade—if there was any!” and Macedonia was a good second in these parts—where there are no trees, a remark that applies to the hills about Salonika and the whole region up to the Doiran-Vardar front at least. In the Krusa Balkan, the wooded hills give a little welcome shade. With the arrival of the hot weather the flowers soon die, the grass quickly becomes dry and burnt, and the erstwhile smiling countryside presents a brown appearance, dreary in its monotony. Grass fires are of daily occurrence, and spreading over large areas, burn the countryside, leaving ugly black patches. A temperature of 100° in the “shade” is common. The only period of the day when work can be done in reasonable comfort is early morning and late afternoon and evening; and “summer hours”—confining all but essential work to these periods, and resting as much as possible during the heat of the day—are adopted in the Salonika Army. Even when doing no work one is able to get but little real rest during the heat of the day. The pitiless sun beats down upon the parched and burning soil. Although clad only in shirt and khaki drill “shorts”—like footballers’ outfit—one just lay and panted and perspired, and arms, face and body were wet with perspiration, even when lying down in a tent or the “shade.” During the day a heat haze

of almost unbelievable density obscures the even mediumly distant mountain ranges and forms a kind of thick blue-grey atmosphere. I had often read in books of the intense desire of travellers in tropical climates for a drink of cold water, but only during our first summer, outside Salonika, on the parched, dusty, and absolutely shadeless Lembet plain, did I realise what it meant. The drinking water was always lukewarm, and chlorinated, of course, into the bargain, and to the parched soldier even copious draughts failed to give satisfaction or quench the everlasting thirst, and for some months the chief desire of my life was for a drink of real cold water. Fortunately up country, in the hills and valleys, there are many excellent springs, which are like heaven to the thirsty man.

And the hot weather brings with it myriads of insects and flies, which make life decidedly unpleasant on the plains and low lying grounds, and render any kind of rest impossible during the day. Frogs abound in millions. The lakes and swampy marshes team with them, and at night the shrill cry of thousands of tree frogs, and the hoarse croak of as many bull frogs, rends the air. Grasshoppers of all sizes abound, and other insects too numerous to mention. Flies teem in millions and are a regular plague in the hot weather—both horse flies and the common "house" fly. Any refuse or food left in the open is immediately covered with them. Frequently a piece of food couldn't be seen, for the swarm of flies on it, and fly-proof safes and stringent regulations about leaving food, etc., about, are necessary all the summer. The British house fly usually leaves human beings in peace, but his Balkan

relative is not so considerate. Unless protected by netting, rest or sleep in the heat of the day—hard enough to obtain owing to the actual heat itself—is rendered impossible by flies, who persist in crawling over hands and face or bare knees, and when driven away, simply return to the attack and render rest quite impossible.

But the worst enemy during the hot weather is the mosquito, with its attendant malaria. Every lake, pool, or marsh is their breeding ground, and a constant war has to be waged against these pests. The anti-malaria and anti-mosquito crusade forms an important duty, for if bitten by the malaria-carrying mosquito the strongest man will soon be shivering in a fit of ague, perspiration, and suffering from a malignant fever, which may recur again and again for the remainder of his life. Insect life is a distinct worry during the hot weather, and after a summer in Macedonia, the plague of frogs, lice and flies in Ancient Egypt are no longer regarded as miracles, but as a mere commonplace.

In the hills, conditions are better and much more healthy, and it is with relief that one leaves the burning plain, with its swarms of flies, for the comparative comfort of the hills, where one may rest in peace. Flies are not nearly so numerous on the mountains as on the baked plain, and as mosquitoes do not travel far from their low lying breeding pools, it is also far more healthy—though precautions cannot be relaxed, as some may be breeding in pools on the hills. On the hills one gets any breeze that may be blowing; not like the baking, sheltered valley with its unbearable heat. To go on to wooded hills like the Krusa Balkan, after gasping in the

shadeless plains, or the rocky or burnt scrub-covered hills of the Doiran-Vardar line, is like heaven. How one revels in the cooler atmosphere and comparative freedom from flies and mosquitoes, and enjoys the shady woods with their cool glades, which give welcome cover from the burning sun.

During the hot weather any physical exertion is a discomfort, and one is "chronically tired." That is the only way I can describe that feeling of continual tiredness which seems to cling to one the whole summer. No amount of freedom from work—for real "rest" it is hard to call it—makes one "fresh." One is not absolutely played out. You can do a long day's work, but you feel just as tired at the commencement as at the end—often more so, for the walking or exertion seems to wear it off for a while. One just plods along and can "carry on" for a considerable while, pouring perspiration from every pore, but one is always dog-tired. The feeling of having any kind of energy is gone, one seems to do things mechanically, and every member of the Salonika Force will know what I mean by "feeling chronically tired" for the long months of the hot weather. Life seems to have departed from the hot, oppressive air. At night, even when sleeping almost naked in the open, one feels quite warm, for even the nights are oppressive. It is usually in the early morning that the atmosphere feels really cool and refreshing. Thunderstorms, however, very occasionally relieve the heat, and give a short—too short—spell of welcome cool.

The worst of the hot season is usually over by the end of August, and though September is also a hot month it



is not the oppressive heat of those burning summer months, and a welcome change is taking place. The nights become fresh and cool, unlike the heavy, warm, oppressive nights in the hot weather. Thunderstorms are usually most frequent during September and October, and they come on with great suddenness at times. One of the finest sights I have seen was a thunderstorm which occurred early in September, 1916, and though I was caught in it and thoroughly soaked to the skin, I quite enjoyed it. About this time, though the days were scorchingly hot the nights were beginning to get cool. The afternoon was so hot that when I was going out about 4 p.m. to the line, for preparation for night work, I debated whether I would go in shirt sleeves or wear a jacket. Thinking of the cool hours of the night, I decided on the jacket, and toiled perspiringly out. About 7 p.m. a thunderstorm came on, and never have I seen so sudden and complete a change. In about half-an-hour the clear blue sky and brilliant scorching sun gave place to a sky as black as ink. Flash after flash of lightning played over the hill tops and rain fell in torrents. We were drenched to the skin in a few minutes, so it was no use looking for shelter. It was, however, a scene of grandeur. It was none of the odd flashes of a thunderstorm at home, but flash after flash in rapid succession along the hill tops, showing up the rugged mountains in the distance, while "heaven's artillery" kept up a continuous crash. It was pitch dark. We could not see the white tracing tape at our feet, and the flashes were so blinding that I couldn't see my corporal when actually touching him. This lasted for about three hours, and the lightning dancing along

the hill tops in jagged forks was an imposing spectacle..

September and October are like February and March, usually months of extreme temperatures. The days are still hot but the nights are getting colder as winter approaches, and the end of October or middle of November usually sees the beginning of winter conditions. I have said that the Macedonian climate is one of extremes, and in those short months of spring and autumn that come between the winter, with its blizzards, and the scorching tropical heat of summer, one experiences these extremes in a single day—perspiring with any exertion in the heat of the day and numbed with the cold at night. It has been remarked that the change from the cold to the hot weather, and vice versa, is rapid. How rapid may be illustrated by the spring of 1917. About the 17th of March, the weather was raw, wild and cold, and snow fell on the 16th and 17th. By the 24th March it was quite warm, and on the 6th April—that beautiful month—I was going about in shirt sleeves, experiencing relief in having discarded a jacket. It was too hot to wear one—more pleasant and warm weather than an English midsummer.

M. J. RATTRAY.

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Just across the plain,  
 In the village of High Poroï,  
 "Johnny" strolls about with disdain,  
 Till our gunners they do annoy ;  
 So to spite the bounders  
 They gave them a dose from their 60 pounders.

SPR. GILLICHAN.

## A CURIOUS INCIDENT.

*(With apologies to G.T.M.B. and E.S.)*

It was a dark winter's evening in Macedonia, there was no moon, and as it had been raining for some days previously the ground was very wet and muddy. A section of an R.E. Field Company was under orders to leave H.Q. camp and to relieve another section which was in the line.

It was dark when the section left the H.Q. camp. Their way lay up a steep hill and then down the further slopes to a ravine at the hill bottom, a distance of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles. They were not allowed to cross the sky-line at the top of the hills until after dark, as at that point they came into view of the enemy; also no lights were allowed after passing that point.

The party was preceded by a G.S. wagon carrying the section's kit and tools, then came the officer marching at the head of his section. They had got to the top of the hill and about half way down the other side when the wagon stopped. It was pitch dark, only the distance being occasionally illuminated by a Very light—sent up from the enemy trenches—and now and again by the burst of a shell over to the left. The wind rustled in the bushes, and it was soft and muddy and had begun to rain.

The section had halted behind the wagon waiting for it to go on again. After a short time, as the wagon did not start, the officer went on to see what was the matter. It was so dark that the wagon was only visible as a darker blur; imagine his surprise when he arrived at

the front of the wagon to find—nothing ! No mules, no drivers ; and on examination it proved that the front wheels of the wagon also had vanished and the body was nose down in the mud. The officer called his section sergeant, and they shouted into the night but got no reply.

It were best to draw a veil over the next few minutes, but there was a rumour that the section were much impressed by their officer's vocabulary.

At the advanced camp the section being relieved were all ready with their kits packed and tin hats on, waiting for the relief. The officer looked at his watch and wondered how much longer the section would be. Suddenly they heard the tramp of hoofs and the rumble of wheels—the relief at last. The team halted and some of the section went past to lend a hand at unloading the wagon, but when they got behind the wheel pair of mules, they found only a pair of wheels. “What !—shouted the sergeant. The drivers looked round—“Well, I'm ——! I thought she pulled wonderfully easy.”

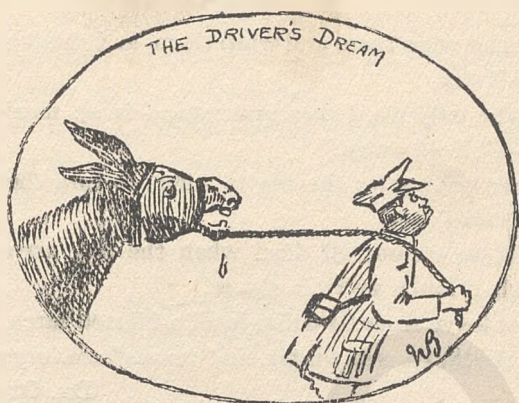
It was said that the first officer's language was not a patch on this one's. It was raining quite hard now.

R. F. MIDDLETON.

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When the Company first went to France,  
 With everyone waiting his chance ;  
     We were marching all day  
     Around Amiens way,  
 And, by jingo, we were led a dance.





### WOES OF A DRIVER.

A driver's job in the Balkans is nothing at which to  
jump,

And after two years O.A.S., we've more or less got the  
hump.

We get up in the morning and go down on the line,  
And for our dear old home in Blighty we do nothing  
else but pine.

We turn out in the morning to go where 'er we're sent,  
And when the Judgment day comes, we shall have a  
great deal to repent.

Our work is driving mules, those elongated beasts,  
They jib when they have work to do, but do not jib at  
feasts.

They get called all the ugly names on pack work or  
in draught,

And one would never fancy that these things were so  
daft.

You may whip them and whip them, and shout at them  
 all day,  
 But the only word they understand is at meal times  
 —“ Feed away.”  
 We are longing for the day to come, to turn these long  
 brutes over,  
 And if we are not all dead when the day arrives, we  
 shall fancy we're in clover.  
 To get leave from Salonika is all a blessed farce,  
 And like the trees in winter, the “leaves” are very scarce.

DR. OTHEN.

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#### OUTLINE SKETCH OF THE BALKANS.

The Balkan States have frequently been referred to as “The Cock-pit of Europe,” which is another way of saying “It is the scrap heap of the world,” or again in homely terms—“The last place God ever made.”

St. Paul once visited the country and preached to the people, but he found out the sort of place it was, and after that, he contented himself with writing epistles to them. There were no “flies” on St. Paul you see, and he took care that the summer variety didn't get a look in; but he was exceptionally lucky.

Methods have not changed much since his time, and to-day one can see corn threshed with a flail, and the chaff “winnowed” from it by throwing it into the air. Wooden ploughs drawn by oxen are quite a common sight.

To any civilian who is desirous of seeing the country after the war, I would suggest that Messrs. Cook, of

tours fame, will be in a position to show them where our bit of the Great War took place, as good roads have been made right up to the front line.

One can imagine the guide leading a party of tourists along the many mule tracts that have been made, alongside the ravines and nullahs, and spinning a tale of the hordes of Bulgars that were slaughtered "on this very spot, ladies and gentlemen."

Speaking of the country generally it is the best place I know of — to live away from.

SPR. W. G. BROWN.

### A DAY'S OUTING.

Once we were bound for Snevce,  
With a gallant team so frisky,  
The roads were so bad  
They stuck there, dab,  
And the drivers felt like some whisky.

I said to my lads, "that's risky,  
I don't think we'll have any whisky,  
We will just show the mules  
Army regulations and rules,  
Even if we have to knock them to Snevce."

The mules then kicked up a shindy,  
Dynamite, Pudden and Windy,  
Gave one sudden buck  
Shouted the drivers "Look up!"  
We shan't be long before we're in Snevce.

At last we arrived at the dump,  
 We all, more or less, had the hump,  
     Things looked very black,  
     Not knowing how to get back  
 With our barbed wire, pickets and pump.

On the road back, the mules did prance,  
 Windy and Pudden led us a dance ;  
     They started off well,  
     And the pace never fell,  
 So we got back to Sal Grec Avance.

L.CPLS. BURRIDGE and HILL.

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#### EXTRACT FROM THE MACEDONIAN MERCURY.

It is unofficially announced that the mounted section of the Umpteenth Field Company on Christmas Day displayed decided natural talent in their sketch entitled "I ain't barmy." The M.O. is reported to have stated that he believed the performance was given in reality.

Coy. Order, dated 31/2/25.—I. All troops will be issued with bows and arrows in consequence of the shortage of ammunition.

II. Sapper B. R. — Having discovered unique methods for making a speedy and effective hair restorer, will give a practical demonstration in the Town hall at Karamoudli. All troops wishing to attend should hand in their names and number of Bath chairs to their section nurse.

The following definitions may be useful to those who understand not the ways of a sapper :



I. An R.E. is a peculiar creature who travels about with a five foot rod which is four feet in length, and displays a fiendish delight for barbed wire, sandbags and fatigue parties.

II. A plumber is a very sagacious bird, if spoken to affectionately; answers to the name of Dan; displays remarkable avidity for misappropriating "Backsheesh" iron when the Captain is not near. Also shows a decided talent for making souvenirs and "whip me unders." N.B.—Has never been known to miss a rum ration parade.

PR. M. MILLER.

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Sapper Jack Sloger, with a slight knowledge of everything under the sun, can sew and darn like a woman, wash a shirt to the dirtiest dixie. Can make a roly-poly jam duff out of his hard biscuits. Expert at making dug-outs with sandbags and brushwood. Can convert Greek cottages into bridges and, if required, can blow them up at a moment's notice. Can take his quinine when ordered—But me no likee rum Johnny, but a double issue very acceptable.

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To a native girl, down at Mahmudli,  
 A Tommy conversed rather crudely,  
     He commenced meek and mild,  
     But —she was no child,  
 And it ended, in fact, rather rudely.



## SOME EXPERIENCES OF THE COMPANY WHILST IN FRANCE.

We left Sutton Veny on Sunday, September 19th, 1915, and entrained for Southampton, arriving there about midnight. We slept in the dock shed that night and went on board the next day, September 20th, sailing at 6 p.m. I was one of the party that went on a certain transport, and never shall I forget the journey. She was an old paddle-boat, and was really the worst boat I had ever the luck to sail on. I don't think there were half-a-dozen on her that were not sick. I happened to be one of the half-a-dozen, but the others were in a dreadful state. I don't think they would have cared one bit if the old tub had gone to the bottom. Anyway we arrived at Le Havre about 8 a.m. the next morning, September 21st, and glad enough we were to get there. We disembarked and marched to a rest camp—a march of about six miles—staying there that night. We marched to the station the next day and entrained for Amiens at 8 a.m., which we reached about eight o'clock that night. We detrained as quickly as possible and then started on the march again. I may mention that the R.T.O. at Amiens was very pleased at the smart way we detrained. If I remember rightly we had everything off the train in a little over half an hour, which was not bad considering it was our first attempt. We then started off and marched through Amiens, a matter of about five miles, when the O.C.—then Major Eustace—called a “halt,” and we turned into a field to bivouac for that night, and by the time

we had settled down, it was close on midnight. I think everyone was dead tired and we slept the sleep of the just until reveille next morning at 3 a.m. We had breakfast and were ready to move again at 5 a.m.

We started off as happy as "sand boys," little knowing what was in store for us. We marched to a place called Fluxicourt where a "halt" was called—having covered about 10 miles—and were hoping that our march was finished for that day—but no such luck, for we started off again, and it started to rain in torrents. Oh, shall I ever forget that? I think it was the most miserable time I ever remember.

When you come to think we were troops just out from England and carrying full equipment, it was really astonishing how we kept going on and on, soaked to the skin, and no idea how far we were going before we halted for the night. Eventually we arrived at a place called L'Salouel where, we were told, we were to billet for the night. Having arrived there at 11-30 p.m. it was past midnight before we were all in our billets. This place was about 11 miles from Fluxicourt, so we had covered 21 miles that day, and it almost broke our hearts when we discovered that we were only about half a mile from where we had started from that morning.

No doubt there are several in the Company who remember how our late Sergt. Major (Sergt. Major Strachan) tried to put heart into us whilst we were on the march by telling us it was only a quarter of a mile further. Time after time he told us that, but still we kept on marching. I think myself it would have been far better to have told us the truth, as I don't think



there was a man who would have given in until he dropped. We were all out to do our bit, and intended to do it to the best of our ability. No doubt they also remember the time when the same Sergt. Major told us we had only to go as far as that light, and discovered that that light was the rear light of a motor lorry going the same way as we were marching. But to get on with the story, we left L'Salouel next morning about 9 o'clock. It seemed to us a case of marching, marching, marching, always bally well marching, as the song goes. Eventually we arrived at a place called Villiers Bretoneux at 2 p.m., after travelling a matter of thirteen miles, and billeted in what I think had been a factory. I know we were thankful to get there, especially when the Major told us we were likely to stay for a day or two. I remember the next day the Major paraded us all and complimented us on our marching. I know that everyone was glad with the rest we had there, and think myself that we all deserved it. After staying there for four days we started on the move again.

This time to a place called Harbonniers, which was our Company H.Q.'s whilst we were in that part of the country. It was from here that the sections went forward to Herleville, and did their first bit of real war work, and tasted their first baptism of shell fire. It was here that a certain section had what they thought was a gas attack, but it turned out to be the smell from an incinerator, close by. After staying at Herleville for a few weeks we again started on the move, this time back to Harbonniers and on from there to Aubigny, where we stayed for a day or two. From there we went through Corbie—meeting the Field Co.—

the first time of seeing them since leaving England—to Olincourt, where we stayed for a few days, and then on again to Frehencourt. Leaving there we marched to Méricourt L'Abbe. From this place the sections went on detachment. My section, No. 1, went to Derincourt, being attached to the —— Field Co. We spent a very happy week there and then were off back again to meet the company, and on to Bonnay. We only stopped a few days at that place, going on to Montigny, where we stayed about a fortnight. Leaving there, we marched back again to Amiens and entrained to go down country. This journey lasted about sixty hours, and we were all glad enough when we arrived at Marseilles, and having detrained we marched to La Valentine, which proved to be our camping ground for the last time in France.

No doubt there are many in the Company who could give an account of their experiences during their stay at Marseilles, which I hope they will truthfully do (Compres). I will now finish my part of the story, and hope someone will continue on with our experiences in this God-forsaken hole.

C.S.M. COLE, W

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Two Turks, living down in Bajirli,  
 Said " why are we feeling so quirli,"  
 But mother cried out,  
 It's the fleas, without doubt,  
 For you wash yourselves only once yirli.

## VOCES POPULI.

(Scraps of conversation overheard in the neighbourhood.)

At a football match on 'Xmas Day—the crowd enters with much laughter to the accompaniment of the Drivers' Band—which heralds the approach of the opposing teams—to the considerable inconvenience of an infantry transport's sports.

Infantry Col.—“ Merry Christmas to you all. When's your band coming up to play at our mess ? ”

The M.—“ Same to you all—sorry but we daren't leave them off the chain ! ”

A new Officer—“ What's the tune ?—I can't make it out—surely a nautical air ? ”

An old Officer—“ Only one of B——'s pals come home from sea, I fancy. Some band, what ? ”

The game starts.

The Old Firm—“ Two to one on the Sappers—2 to 1—Here you are, my lucky lads.”

A Bell Ringer—“ That's the way, through with it, Paddy.”

An Adversary—“ Come away with that bell. You won't want that blinking bell in a minute, I tell you.”  
Jeers from drivers.

A Voice—“ Come along, Smiler—get your head under it, my boy.”

More Voices—“ That's the way—Jock's got it.”

Chorus of Drivers and much bell ringing—“ Lost it too”—as the ball goes down the field.

Chorus of Sappers, as the Back clears and the attack

begins again—"Now then, Joss, let Mollie have it! Good boy—he's got it. Shoot!!"

Whistle and } "Goal."  
spectators together } "Off-side."

with "told you so, my lad. What was it, Ref."

The game progresses. Half-time is reached. 1—0 against.

The Drivers—"10 to 1 on the Sappers!"—bets taken. "Where are those Drivers!—where are those Drivers, I say!" More bets taken.

Play recommences—"Now then, show 'em how to play football!"

Spectators—"Billie's got it. Pass—pass—that's the way. That's football, that is. Centre! Through with it, now."

Spectators together.— } "Goal!"  
 } "Corner kick!"

Drivers—"Good old J. C. ! See him save that one of Turner's—a beauty."

Game continues. More goals are scored. The betting odds keep pace "5—0—100 to 1" "We'll show you how to play football. Where's that bell, now?" (It changes sides.)

Spectators—"Now you've got it—through with it. Rush him in after it. That's the way. Goal! They had the goalie beat that time."

Sergt. B.—"7—0. Come along, Sappers, you've only got the goalie to beat!"

Corpl. W.—"Come along, Drivers—you've only Sergt. Brown to beat."

Sergt. Brown—"1,000 to 1 on the Sappers."



Sappers altogether, as the 8th goal is scored, "One—Two—Three—Four—Five—Six—Seven—Eight!"

Whistle blows time.

The teams together.—"Three cheers for the Drivers—Sappers—Hip—Hip—Hip—Hooray!"

Exit crowd well pleased.

### AT THE HORSE SHOW.

"They are judging the pack mules now. We don't stand an earthly; our Packs aren't polished—only clean."

"That doesn't matter, they judge on condition and cleanliness."

"Here's the book of words—it says so."

"Go hon. What about the N.C.O.'s riding class? Did Sergt. Bugg win, or was he turned out of the ring without being looked at, and the winner's stirrups red with rust inside? Go hon!—I say."

"Winnie's knees what done it."

"Condition and cleanliness? That be damned for a tale."

"There! I told you—L-A-S-T!—poor old one-o'-seven."

"What can you expect, mate, with their O.C. judging and his captain in the ring."

"Now, what about Pontoon teams? Three entries but only two prizes. Shall we get 'em both?"

"Sure thing! But anyhow, they can't touch our first—no blessed chance—poor blighters—for all their new paint and spare pontoon wheels, and all."

"Lord! They are being careful this time. Turning harness and examining pouches and ammunition. This *is* judging!"

"Thank God, I saw to that, anyhow! and I don't care what they do to my harness—turn it inside out, its clean—the more the better."

(As red rosette is handed to lead driver)—"First by ——!"

"Well done one-o'-seven."

Winning team drives past.—"Eyes right!—Eyes front! (Damned good turn out, too.)"

General P.—"Congratulations, Major—that's a good win. All done by good stable management, eh!"

Major.—"No, sir. The boys did it all themselves."

Capt.—"Thank goodness we got that, old thing!"

Major.—"Same here, you kept out of it most successfully. What about a drink to celebrate the occasion—and a rum issue to-night—all round?"

H. H. E. GOSSET.

A Greeko, who came from Butkova,  
Was a brigand of note, and a rover;  
But when out "on the make,"  
He got bit by a snake,  
And now his excursions are over.

A soldier, who came from Rupel,  
Spun a yarn, both glibly and well,  
But his sceptical peers  
Received it with jeers,  
And said, "What a lie, go to H——."

## A PROPHECY FROM THE FAR WEST.

Absolute knowledge I have none,  
 But my aunt's washerwoman's sister's son  
 Heard a policeman on his beat  
 Say to a labourer in the street,  
 Who had a letter just last week,  
 Written in the finest Greek,  
 From a Chinese coolie, in Timbuctoo,  
 Who said a nigger in Cuba knew  
 Of a coloured man in a Texas town  
 Who got it straight from a circus clown.

That a man in Klondyke heard the news  
 From a gang of South American Jews,  
 About somebody in Borneo  
 Who heard a man, who claimed to know  
 Of a sweet society female rake,  
 Whose mother-in-law will undertake  
 To prove that her seventh husband's sister's niece  
 Has stated in a printed piece  
 That she had a son, who had a friend  
 Who knows when the war is going to end.

SPR. GALLICHAN.

(With apologies to his relatives in California.)

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A soldier who came from the Struma,  
 Once spread a most interesting Ruma ;  
     But the tale, it appears,  
     Reached the G.O.C.'s ears,  
 And he's now in a regular stuma.

## —TH FIELD COMPANY, R.E.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS.

## MILITARY CROSS—

Capt. (a/Major) H. H. E. GOSSET dated 1- 1-18  
 ii Lieut. F. THOS. WRIGHT „ 10- 1-17

## MILITARY MEDAL—

11402 Corpl (a/Sergt.) PETHYBRIDGE, F. „ 25- 9-17  
 65169 Corpl. GAWLER, G. H. „ 25- 9-17  
 65160 Corpl. HOY, J. R. „ 25- 9-17  
 65693 Sapper MOODY, B. S. „ 25- 9-17

## MÉDAILLE MILITAIRE—

65160 Corpl. HOY, J. R. „ 7- 3-17

## MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES—

Major (a/Lt. Col.) F. R. H. EUSTACE „ 8-10-16  
 Capt. (a/Major) H. H. E. GOSSET „ 29- 3-17  
 49122 Sergt. (C.S.M.) COLE, W. „ 8-10-16  
 65163 L/Cpl. KITCHEN, A. C. „ 29- 3-17

## 1914 STAR—

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А.П.О.

